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Changes in International Research Cooperation in China: Positive Perspectives

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Abstract: This paper discusses how cooperation between Chinese researchers and their foreign counterparts has changed. The paper draws on current literature and the author's experience as a researcher in the US and in China, arguing that while cooperation has increased overall, it has done so in ways that have crowded out old forms of cooperation or made them passé. The paper focuses particularly on how changes at leading Chinese research institutions have impacted international cooperation, both positively and negatively, and suggests ways in which foreign scholars might effectively pursue new avenues for cooperation and exchange.

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to join the on-going discussion of changes affecting cooperation between Chinese and non-Chinese researchers. Others in this journal have focused especially on how changes have affected individual, Western-based scholars. The present paper focuses on examining this topic broadly, but with a special emphasis on an area that seems to have been largely neglected; that is, the perspective of a Western scholar who has worked both as a Western-based and China-based researcher and who has observed these changes first-hand from both sides. I hope that this paper will provide readers who have a professional interest in cooperation with Chinese researchers and institutions with insights that may help them adapt positively to new but increasingly competitive avenues for cooperation.

Some participants in this discussion have taken the position that the climate and opportunities for cooperation with Chinese researchers have degraded over the past several years. The general consensus is that a complicated mixture of factors has dis-incentivised meaningful cooperation, particularly in the social sciences. These factors include new requirements compelling Chinese researchers to publish their own research in leading journals, earn money in increasingly marketised institutions, and respond to both new and longstanding political restraints that effectively ensure that both Chinese and foreign researchers limit their work in ways that are more palatable to official interests, particularly government ones.

While acknowledging that international cooperation has changed over the years and recognising that these changes have negatively impacted some researchers' work, the present paper argues that international cooperation, from the Chinese perspective at least, has grown positively over the same period of time. The paper starts with a brief history of the changes that have affected researchers over the course of the reform and opening-up period, from 1978 to present. It will discuss the programmes and reforms that have significantly affected research cooperation. It will discuss the new challenges that some foreign researchers have encountered in recent years, as well as ongoing changes in Chinese academic culture. In conclusion, it will suggest a number of possible ways that researchers might adjust to fit new approaches for cooperation.

The Way it Used to Be

It used to be relatively easy to find a China-based scholar interested in supporting a foreign-led research project. A foreign researcher might meet such a scholar formally at an international conference or while visiting China, or, informally, simply show up unannounced at almost any Chinese institution and solicit cooperation with a high rate of success. A researcher who needed more basic forms of assistance could approach university departments or even stand at university gates and within a few minutes be approached by a number of competent students willing to assist merely for the experience or a very modest stipend. It is difficult to say precisely when things changed, as they did so depending on the location and rank of the institution or scholars and students involved. However, my experience suggests that as late as 2002, it was still possible to make such connections, even in Beijing, despite an already discernible resistance to the same. In other words, at some point in the last decade, there has been a gradual but substantial shift underway in leading centres like Beijing and Shanghai, radiating outward, that has affected international research cooperation.

In fact, these changes were not necessarily aimed at research cooperation per se. While the shallow yet beneficial novelty of being a foreigner in China is not as strong as it once was, even in the late 1990s and early 2000s, being a foreigner could result in a number of advantages. Initially, this climate was the result of at least three factors working together. First, as is well known, there was a major amount of pent-up demand during the early years of reform and opening up as scholars and students moved to make up for the time and opportunities lost before and during the Cultural Revolution. Second, fundamentally, "opening up" conveyed a significant measure of internationalisation. Third, there was an overall sort of naiveté in that most Chinese researchers had little experience working with international scholars, which meant they were often less sophisticated and more overeager. This was true also of Foreign Affairs Offices (FAOs). Tasked with both regulating and facilitating exchange, their crude mechanisms for the former were easily surmounted in favour of the latter. Of course, it was hardly a secret that many who worked in FAOs had ambitions of going abroad themselves and were often derided by other Chinese as being "fake foreigners" (假洋人, *jia yangren*, 假老外, *jia laowai*, etc.), a derivation of Lu Xun's old insult, "fake foreign devil" (假洋鬼子, *jia yangguizi*). Indeed, it is good to recall the darker context of Lu Xun's original term given that some Chinese did whatever they could to go abroad, even if it meant putting foreign interests ahead of Chinese ones.

Of course, this does not mean that all or even most researchers were unscrupulous or that their Chinese counterparts were exploited. It simply recalls that there was a period when the relationships between foreign and Chinese researchers were significantly in favour of the former. Regardless of whether this power was abused explicitly, its mere existence meant that its exercise was unavoidable. How many foreign researchers were treated to lavish banquets, places of honour next to senior leaders, and the like, much to their embarrassment? It was easy for these researchers to convince themselves that the Chinese were exploiting the foreigner's visit as a good excuse to enjoy a nice dinner at the institution's expense while gaining from the face and possible opportunities that might follow hosting an international guest.

Such thinking, however self-serving, was not entirely without merit. Without question, many Chinese researchers were at one time willing partners because such relationships might prove immediately valuable while also potentially opening doors for more benefits to come. While working with a foreign researcher might yield some modest economic benefits, it also could result in Pierre Bourdieu's trifecta of symbolic, social and cultural capital. After all, such a partnership could symbolise opening up, yield social benefits with respect to intellectual legitimacy and the like, and convey cultural values associated with being a type of bridge as China emphasised knowledge transfer and rapid development.

Changes

Whatever its initial cause, and whether it was a response to the need for reform and opening up or an unabashed cultural fetishism, the relative ease that foreign researchers enjoyed when seeking cooperation with Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) and Chinese researchers has changed noticeably. While there were various forms of backlash against foreigners in the wake of the challenges that China experienced in 1999 (the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, large-scale weapon sales to Taiwan, the United States' embarrassing handling of China's negotiations to join the WTO, etc.), it is also true that other developments kept a large number of opportunities open. The general cultural milieu was still one of "English fever"; for example, in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics (2008) and the Shanghai World Expo (2010). Further, from 1999 onwards, China began shifting from an elite model to a mass education model. This required dramatic expansion and often reinvention of university culture and administration, which in turn created open spaces between expiring and emergent models of exchange and cooperation.

Many foreign researchers came to China and took advantage of such a climate, and some, for whatever reason, took more than they gave. Because of this, it would be normal to expect backlash, ranging from no longer being treated as a distinguished guest to be being rebuffed and ignored. Such repercussions were sometimes merely a response to an increasing number of disappointing experiences with foreigners in China and abroad, but it is more likely that they followed from the simple fact that many Chinese researchers became more sophisticated and discerning of their international relationships as experiences and opportunities increased over time.

On the whole, however, it would be overly one-sided to suggest that such changes should be characterised negatively. It would also be wrong to suggest that changes were primarily in response to negative experiences. In other words, it would be wrong to conclude that Chinese researchers were angry and largely dissatisfied with their experiences working with international researchers. There are many reasons why the changes of recent years are largely the result of past cooperation. A more important point to make is that while things have changed, many Chinese researchers and institutions now see international cooperation expanding today relative to the past.

More Cooperation, Not Less

It is well known that Chinese research and HEIs have experienced numerous changes over the course of reform and opening up. HEIs worldwide have encountered significant changes over the same period of time. That said, can any country claim to have experienced more dramatic changes than China? First, the country emerged from the difficulties faced during the Cultural Revolution, only to experience the halcyon days of the early 1980s before the tragedy of 1989.

Throughout the 1990s, Western-oriented debates between Chinese liberals and the new left drove much of the intellectual discussion, while HEIs rapidly constructed business schools and other professional programmes to complement marketised and other government-driven economic reforms. Next, the transition from an elite to a mass education model started in 1999 amid the continued knowledge transfer but with an increasing emphasis on indigenous developments of theory and technology. Chinese researchers and HEIs found themselves being both liberated and subjugated by expanding market forces. Thousands of people went abroad and many returned, enriched and sometimes jaded by their experiences. At the same time, the emergence of new confidences in Chinese advancements, in tandem with increasingly critical assessments of foreign approaches, drove many people to reassess the value and purpose of international cooperation. The point to make here is that Chinese research HEIs, whether they were at the forefront of change or merely dragged along with it, have been pushed to keep the same blistering pace that affects the rest of Chinese society. For example, it is well known that Chinese universities, from their curricular and enrolment changes to their researcher funding and physical plant, have been deeply affected by marketisation, and the same is true for leading research institutes like the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau.

Along the way, several national initiatives have been implemented with the aim of bringing more structure and focus to such developments. Notable examples include the 863 Programme and the 211 and 985 projects. The first of these, the 863 Programme (so-called because it was implemented March 1986, but known more formally as the National High Technology Research and Development Program), was implemented under Deng Xiaoping's leadership to push technological development. Aiming more directly at HEIs, however, the 211 Project (connoting the 100 top universities for the 21st century) and the 985 Project (named for its date of implementation, May 1998) were put in place in order to cultivate world-class universities capable of supporting China's increasingly complex needs (Yang and Welch 2012).

The power and influence of these programmes should not be underestimated. There are presently 214 universities carrying the 211 distinction; 39 of these are also 985 schools. Being accepted in the

985 Project brings a tremendous amount of funding and prestige to a university, but it has also created an increasingly competitive, results-oriented culture in Chinese higher education. The total number of 985 programmes is frozen at 39, but 985 schools are evaluated every three years along with applying aspirants, which makes it possible for a university to lose its prestigious and lucrative 985 status. Of course, competition is not merely a question of retaining the 985 designation; university administrators, party leaders, deans, department heads and the like are continuously evaluated on the basis of where their respective programmes rank relative to others. If a programme drops a few positions against a competitor, leaders can expect to be replaced, and sometimes rather ignominiously (Chen et al. 2009).

Unsurprisingly, this type of competition has led to a number of dramatic changes, including changes in leadership. Research institutions and HEIs are increasingly being led by some of the most advanced scholars and administrators of their generation. These include those individuals who would have been more likely to work as foreign researchers in the past and, in many cases, continue to maintain substantial links with foreign colleagues. These are people with high abilities relative to their peers, which they have used to acquire the social, cultural and symbolic capital they need to help them succeed in a newly competitive environment. As noted above, over the course of reform and opening up, one of the best ways to acquire such capital was through various forms of international cooperation and exchange. This is still the case, in many respects, as will be discussed shortly, although expectations are now higher than before.

Becoming and remaining a "world-class" institution requires meaningful international engagement. More to the point, competing for both domestic and international rankings has required Chinese universities to increasingly "internationalise" (国际化, *guoji hua*). When universities are evaluated, for example, examiners look for certain types of evidence, including the number of papers published by faculty in SSCI and AHCI journals; the number of faculty holding doctorates earned abroad; the number of courses offered in English; the number of foreign, degree-seeking students; and the number of Chinese students who are admitted to and complete degrees abroad following or concurrent with their studies in China. Among China's 985 and 211 institutions, such indicators have increased across the board as competition has increased.

These demands have led to the rapid professionalisation of university administration, with a preference for hiring and promoting people with substantial international experience. After all, China is not trying to compete with some abstract notion of academic excellence; its goal is to produce programmes that can compete concretely with the leading institutions in the world. This requires having people who know how to create such excellence administratively and who can substantially enrich both the research and curricular content in ways that earn increasingly positive international recognition. Consequently, a major goal of 211 and 985 universities has been to become even more internationalised, and to do so selectively in ways that strengthen the university's competitive position.

A short case study of the author's institution will help illustrate these points. Based in Shanghai, East China Normal University (ECNU) is a well-established 211 and middling 985 HEI. This institution was chosen in part because the author's affiliation provides access to data that is otherwise hard to come by. Also, given direct experiences with other Chinese 985 institutions like Peking, Renmin, Fudan, Shanghai Jiaotong, and Tongji universities, ECNU's efforts can be described as comparable to those of its competitors, even though its results rank it as average among China's top universities. It should be stated clearly here that the purpose of providing this information is not some sort of self-serving, or institutional-serving aggrandisement; ECNU certainly suffers from a host of challenges, some of which are peculiar to itself, and others that frequently affect other Chinese institutions. However, these challenges do not take the form of less international cooperation.

With this in mind, consider that ECNU presently hosts approximately 5,800 foreign students, approximately 1,000 of whom are seeking degrees. While the former number is considered respectable, the latter is a focus of concern. This has led to a push to increase the number of courses taught in English but, more importantly, to strengthen curricula overall in order to attract more foreign degree-seekers. Consequently, HEIs are increasingly focused on what is called "discipline construction" (学科建设, *xueke jianshe*), with the aim of creating stronger departments and degree programmes. To do this, 985 universities increasingly try to hire faculty capable of teaching high-level content in English, and one of the best ways to achieve this is to hire faculty who earned their doctorates overseas. Additionally, because a premium is placed on publishing articles in key foreign journals, it is believed that foreign doctorate-holders will also be more capable of crafting impressive publication records. Further, given the tight academic labour market overseas and the high demand for international-level talent in China, particularly in Shanghai and Beijing, it has become increasingly normal for universities in these cities, but 985 institutions generally, to hire foreign educated faculty whenever possible, and sometimes exclusively. This is especially the case in scientific, technical and professional fields, where China lags behind, but it is also true in the humanities and social sciences.

According to the most recent three-year report of ENCU's Office of International Exchange and Cooperation, which was completed in 2013 and reflects data from the previous three years, the university has experienced a steady increase in the number of undergraduates going abroad as well as the employment of short- and long-term foreign experts and foreigners employed as regular faculty (see Table 1). With respect to the last figure, most of the foreigners employed by the university are so-called "sea turtles" (海归, *haigui*, a pun on "returning"); that is, Chinese who acquired foreign citizenship while living abroad but who have now chosen to establish careers in China. In fact, like other HEIs in Shanghai, ECNU has actively but selectively pursued returnees because of their ability to make immediate, bilingual impacts, and many have assumed leading positions.

Table1: Selected Internationalization Indicators from ECNU

	2010	2011	2012
Undergraduates going abroad	370	476	604
Long-term foreign experts	45	59	87
Short-term foreign experts	180	230	270
Foreign regular faculty	30	41	48

Source: Author's compilation of data provided by ECNU's International Exchange Devision.

Selectivity also factors into whom or what HEIs actively recruit. For example, programmes now have a much clearer understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses and are actively pursuing associations with renowned scholars and programmes that either supplement or complement their needs and abilities. In other words, while

HEIs are critically assessing those who approach them directly, they are also targeting others for cooperation and exchange. This means that among potential suitors for cooperation, the likelihood of rejection has increased. It also means that international cooperation, understood as *guoji hezuo* (国际合作), is now embraced primarily in terms of its ability to serve the broader goals of internationalisation, at the institutional level at least, and is much less concerned with serving the more narrowly conceived, scholar-to-scholar interests that drove it before.

Additionally, the ECNU reports 210 active memoranda of understanding with foreign universities and institutions, some dating to the 1980s. This does not include MOUs signed at the department and college level (no such figures are available), but my own department has signed an average of one or two per year since my arrival in 2010. Like other Chinese universities, ECNU has constructed a "global education park" that hosts, on a permanent basis, eight wholly foreign programmes originating in the US, Japan and France. This park is also home to a major Hanban global education training centre in support of Chinese language training activities undertaken by Confucius Institutes worldwide. A centrepiece of the university's internationalisation efforts has been its partnership with New York University to establish the NYU–Shanghai campus, which includes an evenly split co-management and co-staffing scheme and is designed as a vehicle for other forms of cooperation and exchange. The university also hosts an average of 40 international conferences per year, a series of colloquia and roundtables involving internationally renowned scholars, and an even larger number of international delegations looking for opportunities for cooperation and exchange.

Under the broader policy initiatives found in the *Outline of the Long-term Plan for National Education Reform and Development* (2010–2020), upward trends in international cooperation, exchange and research are consistent with other 985 programmes, as well as many of the non-985 211 programmes (Huang 2012; Zhang, Lu, and He 2009). Managing these efforts, developing these programmes and growing them year after year has required a major change in institutional structures. The days of a modest FAO are long gone. In the 1980s and even during most of the 1990s, it was common to have only three or four staff devoted to such efforts, some of whom were often part-time. Today, Peking and Tsinghua universities have 50–60 full-time staff, while the average is 30–40 for other 985 universities and 10–20 for non-985 211 universities, while all others average 5–10 (Hua 2011). At 985 institutions, these bulked-up staffing numbers have not only created opportunities to hire professionals who have trained at the graduate level in international education studies in foreign universities; it has also facilitated a corresponding level of specialisation.

In sum, while FAOs in the past were rather ambiguously devoted to internationalisation in broad terms, today's top institutions have concrete programmes, goals, and measures, with substantial rewards and penalties for success and failure. In the past, programmes were rather passive and unsophisticated and often had to take what they could get. But this is no longer the case in 985 programmes and Beijing and Shanghai-based HEIs. There is more "brand awareness" than before; elite Chinese institutions want to associate with elite counterparts and famous scholars on the level of Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, Jürgen Habermas, Francis Fukuyama, Fredric Jameson, and others like them. Further, Chinese HEIs increasingly hire new graduates from top-ranked foreign doctoral programmes. Today, so many of the "sea turtles" with degrees from second-tier foreign universities and mediocre publication records have failed to secure academic appointments with top institutions in sought-after cities like Beijing or Shanghai that there is a new Chinese slang term to describe them – "seaweed" (海待, *haidai*, a pun on "waiting", i.e. waiting for a job, not yet employed). It is equally the case that individual international researchers who are not famous themselves or coming from famous institutions will hardly merit a response from overtures to cooperation. Of course, if overtures are accompanied by concrete benefits like building joint-programmes, student exchange, or the sharing of research funds, then positive responses are more likely.

On the one hand, these changes have been spurred substantially by domestic initiatives. On the other hand, they have also been driven by the fact that China's rising position, including the rising position of its HEIs, have made China a more desirable destination for foreign institutions, researchers, and students. This has allowed internationalisation efforts to become much more selective. Now, when programmes and scholars approach the university, they are evaluated in terms of their ability to contribute to specific university efforts for excellence and improvement. For example, ECNU has China's second-ranked education college, while its humanities and, to a lesser extent, its social science programmes are generally regarded as being quite strong. Its other programmes, however, are seen as needing assistance. Thus, the university's International Exchange Office now assesses foreign offers of cooperation on the basis of whether the foreign institution or scholar can help, in one form or another, from mere association to much higher levels of involvement.

At the same time, the diversity of foreign institutions approaching Chinese universities has increased almost as much as the overall numbers. In the 1980s, for example, most international cooperation and exchange originated in the form of individual scholars from the US, Canada, Europe, and Japan. Today, in the case of ECNU, more than 30 different countries are represented, with several instances of ten or more schools from a single country working with the university in some capacity.

Downward Pressure on International Cooperation

The bottom line is that all of these new efforts represent an incredible increase in the overall amount of international cooperation, at least from the Chinese perspective, including the narrower conception of scholar-to-scholar cooperation that other papers have emphasised. The informal and scholar-to-scholar relationships that were common in the past still exist, but have been supplanted in many cases by new relationships, particularly institution-to-institution relationships. Many faculty members, often the best and brightest, are expected to join such partnerships in support of institutional growth and development. In fact, they are generally well compensated for doing so. These relationships are often valued optimistically for the potential revenue they might generate, but often lose money overall. Nevertheless, they can still be considered sound investments if they can help improve an institution's ranking and further secure the funds that follow such achievements. It is important to mention this because some people seem to believe that Chinese scholars are eschewing work with foreign colleagues because they are being pressured to earn money for the university. More often than not, the opposite seems to be true. Many faculty members compete with each other for the distinction, remuneration and new opportunities for research and travel abroad that come with being directly associated with these new developments. In my own department, politics, more than half of the research-active professors have travelled abroad this year for research exchange or as visiting scholars. In the previous year, the entire department was sent to Taiwan for two weeks during the summer for exchanges with colleagues in Taibei.

That said, a number of professors are pursuing opportunities for additional income outside of the university and even outside of academia. Given the rising cost of living and the desire that many professors have to regain the economic ground (and its new social standing) that was lost to non-academic professionals who outpaced them, many professors are now interested in accumulating things such as real estate, cars and electronics, as well as opportunities for their children to study abroad. Within HEIs, professors now have more opportunities to earn more money for themselves in a variety of ways, including advising, editing, and heading projects. Outside of their institution, they often engage in consulting, for-profit publishing and other areas that reflect their professional expertise; but it is also common to find some professors who are involved in business ventures, real estate, and market-driven activities. There is no doubt that these opportunities, if not pressures, have diminished the research activities of some scholars.

As noted, HEIs have moved quickly from an elite to a mass model of education since 1999, with many institutions and programmes more than doubling in size. It is not uncommon for an academic department to hire several new faculty members each year. Additionally, many universities have also doubled their facilities by establishing satellite campuses. In many cases, this has led to an expanded role for faculty governance, particularly the "academic councils" working at the department, college and university levels. These councils generally include only full professors, and all of the full professors of a particular department are often either expected to contribute or are welcomed to do so. Although their responsibilities vary by institution, they typically include some measure of involvement in strategic planning, curriculum oversight, assessment of junior colleagues, promotion, and hiring. These changes have put negative pressures on research cooperation, but many have compensated by overworking.

The increased emphasis on publication in key journals has already been noted, both in this paper and elsewhere. Currently, Chinese scholars receive little or no credit for anthologies, conference proceedings, book chapters, translations and even books (although most institutions still require faculty to publish at least one book of a certain length in order to achieve promotion to full professor). Instead, the current emphasis is on SSCI, AHCI and CSSCI publications. At many universities, full professors are now required to publish at least ten articles over a five-year period, while an associate professor is expected to publish as least five during the same amount of time. There are substantial monetary and promotion-related rewards for meeting these expectations, and there are substantial penalties for failure, including salary reduction, demotion and dismissal. These requirements are even stricter for new faculty hired over the last few years, who are generally educated overseas and who are hired in part for their perceived ability to publish in SSCI and AHCI journals in particular. However, the pressure to amass a certain number of publications clashes with the difficulty of publishing in key journals, including the relatively long period of time required for review and publication. In Chinese institutions, credit for publication is only awarded when the article is actually published. Because this process frequently requires two or more years when it comes to many of the leading international journals, Chinese scholars often have a greater incentive to place their work in key domestic publications. In turn, this has affected the type of research and writing that is undertaken.

The point here is that Chinese scholars publishing in domestic journals are more likely to avoid topics that are considered taboo in China. The obvious political sensitivities aside, there are many other topics that are considered risky. For example, it is difficult to publish any piece that takes a critical position towards Islam or Muslim culture, or other subjects that Chinese minorities might view as provocative. But this is only part of the story. One problem is that Chinese articles are stylistically quite different from those found in international journals. They tend to be shorter and use different forms of argumentation. Another problem is that many Chinese scholars are not interested in the topics that are popular among foreign researchers. This is based to some extent on avoiding taboos, but there are also cultural differences that influence the sort of research an individual will undertake.

Some Chinese researchers have become increasingly critical of what might be described as "Orientalist" tendencies among foreign researchers studying China, and therefore less likely to cooperate with them now; or at least less likely to be involved in research projects in which such problems are perceived to exist. This is also true of projects that might be seen as self-orientalising (Vukovich 2012). Until the early 2000s, Chinese academic discourse was being driven substantially by its attempts to assimilate and debate Western liberal and leftist positions, and struggling to do so under the Party's gaze. In other words, Chinese scholars on the left and right were convinced that a better form of government was possible, and many looked overseas for models and inspiration. Liberals were dissatisfied with lagging political reforms, while leftists were unhappy with decreased political activism among the masses and growing inequality. Today there is a growing belief that such alternatives are perhaps more distant, if not difficult to find. After 1999, 9/11, Iraq, the Global Financial Crisis and the US's pivot towards China, Western – particularly American – liberalism no longer enjoys the same cachet it once had, even among Chinese liberals. While liberals, new leftists and the like still remain in China today, they are less consumed by their respective ideologies or former discussions. In many cases, leftists like Wang Hui have moved somewhat towards the right, while liberals like the late Deng Zhenglai have moved towards the left. Increasingly, they have found themselves on common ground. Often they have embarked on research projects that have sought to embrace what are considered to be more authentically Chinese perspectives, theories and interests. To be sure, many of these developments have been encouraged by generous funding opportunities from the central government, as well as prestigious appointments to Consultative Congresses, distinguished chairs, institutes, and so on.

More broadly, many Chinese scholars seem to be at a crossroads in terms of their thinking. New paradigms are being developed and the government is still trying to wield as much influence as it can. It is likely that these and similar developments are influencing scholar-to-scholar international cooperation, insomuch as previously shared perspectives have experienced some degree of erosion.

Additionally, many people are abandoning Western styles of writing and are employing a new type of academic *baihua* (白话), partly in an effort to attract a broader readership and secure their positions as public intellectuals while shucking off the old associations that left them feeling like the academic equivalent of second-class colonial subjects (Wu 2014).

At the same time, the need for scholar-to-scholar cooperation has probably diminished. Senior professors have already forged relationships during long years of association and travels abroad. They are often winding down their active research agendas and/or, for a variety of reasons, are turning inward. Specifically, there is a growing movement among some Chinese intellectuals to reimagine the theoretical and practical bases of their work in ways that are less reliant on international influence. This movement traces substantially to the exhaustion of the new left vs. liberal debates in the early 2000s, and has been deepened by a growing confidence in Chinese ideas in tandem with new doubts about Western thinking given growing political and economic problems in the wake of 9/11 and the global financial crisis of 2008 (Wu 2014; Vukovich 2012). Meanwhile, junior faculty who have been trained abroad have their existing networks as well as a diminished need for cooperation. They are up to speed on the latest theoretical innovations and research methods, and increasingly compete with foreign researchers for funding, access to data, publications in prestigious journals, and so on. Most no longer need the type of support and access that was sometimes provided by foreign researchers, and they certainly do not need support for research conducted in China. It is unlikely that a US-based political scientist specialising in US politics would seek cooperation with a Chinese scholar, and the same is increasingly true in China as well.

Of course, there was a time when foreign scholars could buy their way into China, and cheaply. However, many foreign researchers have now experienced institutional downsizing and budget cuts while, unfortunately, costs in China have risen. Some elite foreign scholars who have managed to maintain high levels of external funding are still capable of financing such relationships and do so, but even they are increasingly complaining about how things have changed.

Conclusion

Overall, international cooperation appears to be increasing from the Chinese perspective. However, in some cases, changes in how and why Chinese scholars cooperate have changed over the years, and in some cases these changes have made some of the older practices of cooperation thoroughly passé. Additionally, a number of other factors have led sometimes to a crowding out of scholar-to-scholar cooperative relationships, especially those that have not been advanced formally and institutionally. Furthermore, a measure of crowding out has accompanied some of the other factors outlined above, including increased responsibilities facing Chinese researchers and the fact that many Chinese researchers are competing successfully with their foreign counterparts more directly. Issues related to differences in interests, writing styles, and quick publication were also noted.

There are many new avenues for cooperation, including those suggested above, most especially through agreements at the institutional level. However, a key factor is to appeal to interests such as "discipline construction" and other 211- and 985-oriented buzzwords that are more likely to attract the immediate support of decision-makers. Because strategic interests are increasingly guiding cooperation, it is a good idea to measure one's individual or institutional rank relative to the programme or scholar that one hopes to approach. Therefore, one might consider approaching programmes occupying either comparable or inferior rankings. Of course, *guanxi* (关系) is still alive in China, and having and then strengthening existing relationships remains very valuable.

There are other openings for initiating cooperation. Chief among these would be a willingness to admit and mentor Chinese doctoral candidates as degree-seeking students. There is sufficient demand for such opportunities among Chinese students and it is relatively easy to find highly qualified students with direct or tangential interests in the mentor's research agenda. These relationships can be invaluable for initiating new networks of cooperation. Another opportunity can be found in the fact that many Chinese institutions are launching their own international journals. CASS now has an imprint with Routledge, for example, while Fudan University has one with Springer. These journals often seek international scholars to join their editorial boards, either as reviewers or in some other capacity. Doing so can lead directly and indirectly to new opportunities for research cooperation.

Additionally, while it is still relatively rare, more and more foreign researchers are taking permanent or long-term positions in Chinese institutions. In some cases, joint appointments are possible. Of course, being based in China reduces the need for some forms of cooperation, but it increases the possibility and substance of others.

Ultimately, Chinese scholars today demand greater mutual respect and understanding than before. While many cooperative relationships were attentive to such concerns in the past, many others came up short or proved exploitative in one form or another, regardless of whether such outcomes were intended. One key basis for mutual understanding is the basic fact that many of the challenges and concerns that Chinese researchers face are very similar, if not identical, to those faced by researchers elsewhere.

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