

The Fudan-UC Center Successfully Held its First Annual Conference on **China's Domestic Challenges**

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By: Haiyi LIU

The Fudan-UC Center on Contemporary China, the first joint center between a Chinese and an American university, successfully launched its inaugural annual conference titled “China’s Domestic Challenges” on March 25, 2013.

Scholars from Fudan and multiple campuses across UC presented their work. The conference attracted a large number of professor and student attendees from other universities, as well as community members from southern California. Richard MADSEN, Director of the Fudan-UC Center, and Peter COWHEY, Dean of UC San Diego School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, kicked off the conference with welcoming remarks on behalf of UC and a brief introduction to the history of the center. PENG Xizhe, Director of the Academic Council, Fudan-UC Center, welcomed everyone on behalf of Fudan University.

During the conference, scholars discussed the various critical challenges that China faces today in its path toward economic development and social change. During the “Public Opinion and Popular Mobilization” session, O’BIEN discussed how Chinese senior citizens in Huashui town engage in political activism and PICKOWICZ asserted that Chinese documentary filmmakers are taking on a new form of patriotism that calls for true patriots to confront difficult issues openly rather than covering them up. HUANG addressed the relationship between Chinese citizens’ knowledge of foreign countries and their evaluation of China, while CHAU discussed how two influential public figures in the Chinese cybermedia define the relationship between themselves, the masses, and the state.

China’s energy issue was also a focal point at the conference. During the “Deregulation of China’s Energy Market” panel, WU Libo reviewed some of the main ecological problems that China faces today in its path toward economic development, as well as the policy measures that the Chinese government has undertaken to foster ecologically sustainable development.

During the “Labor Supply and Rural-Urban Migration in China” session, CHENG Yuan discussed labor and migration by introducing a new economic model to measure the rate of unemployment in China in a reliable and cost-efficient way. Shifting gears from employment to citizenship, ZHANG Li’s paper introduced China’s new point system, which is a new access system that the Chinese government has implemented with the goal of granting urban citizenship to select migrants. Qian YANG explored Chinese popular media representations of migrant workers during the 1980s and 1990s. She noted that stories of female migrants became increasingly popular while stories centering male migrants had been largely absent. In the final presentation on this panel, Haiyi LIU explored Chinese women’s out-migration to Western countries via marriage and presented her five year ethnographic study of China-based matchmaking agencies that help middle-aged, divorced women in China date Western men online.

In the panel on “Health Provision and Health Security in China,” Mei ZHAN addressed why the conventional portrayal of patients as the “weak” social group and medical professionals as its powerful counterpart are far too simplistic in China’s changing medical landscape today through her analysis of the hit Chinese medical TV-series “Angel Heart.” Fei WU presented her research on the effectiveness of community recovery programs in drug users’ recovery outcomes.

In the evening program, Clayton DUBE gave a speech to commemorate the late Richard Baum, former Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Chinese Studies at UCLA, for his contribution as a China scholar, educator, and program builder. PENG Xizhe, China’s foremost demographer, ended the conference with a keynote speech that reviewed the current trends and future challenges of China’s growing population. According to PENG, China is at a demographic turning point: it is changing from an agricultural society into an urban society, from a young society to an old one, and from a society attached to its land to one that is very much on the move.



China's Domestic Challenges Session

Session I: Public Opinion and Popular Mobilization

Chair: Tom GOLD, Professor of Sociology, UC Berkley



O'BRIEN opens the panel with a discussion of how Chinese senior citizens engage in political activism. While SSCs (Societies of Senior Citizens) in China are often thought to be sleepy, non-political organizations focused mainly on community services for the elderly, O'BRIEN tells the story of how SSCs in Huashui town, Zhejiang took the lead in mobilizing protest and causing 11 factories to close. From 2004 to 2005, the Huashui town SSCs helped fund a lawsuit and engineered a petition drive, and organized tent sitting at a chemical park that was notorious for its pollution. The SSCs were effective due to having healthy finances, effective leadership, and active participants. Despite efforts on behalf of the local authorities to rein in Huashui's SSCs in 2005-2006, these efforts had only limiting effects due to effective resistance. Given the SSC experiences in Huashui, O'BRIEN suggests that organized protest in China is more feasible than often thought. Moreover, O'BRIEN believes that understandings of protest outcomes should go beyond the success or failure of single episodes and that scholars should explore long-term consequences for the organizations involved.

What constitutes protest behavior? Is there such a thing as a protest film? In the next presentation, PICKOWICZ addresses these questions with his analysis of the rhetorical strategies used in the 2008 independent Chinese documentary film titled "Who Killed Our Children?" The film, from which PICKOWICZ shows key clips, focuses on interviews conducted in one village following the catastrophic Sichuan earthquake of spring 2008. The filmmakers were able to arrive immediately following the quake and before local officials closed off the area to outsiders. Through the interviews, the filmmakers show the villagers' dissent with the high death toll following the earthquake. Many of the victims were children who died in the shoddy construction of their school buildings that were not built up to standard due to a lack of law enforcement. Moreover, the film shows the villagers' anger with national television anchors that transported children from neighboring villages to the earthquake site to film them under pretense. PICKOWICZ asserts that while "Who Killed Our Children?" is a protest film, it is done in new and interesting ways that are gaining currency in China. Rather than being Cold War type dissidents, PICKOWICZ asserts that the filmmakers takes a patriotic stance and argue that true patriotism should deal with difficult issues openly and directly rather than covering them up.

HUANG's research addresses the relationship between international knowledge and domestic attitudes. Specifically, he examines the relationship between Chinese citizens' knowledge of foreign countries - advanced democracies in particular- and their evaluation of China. Results from HUANG's survey of 1,500 college students at Hehai University in China suggest that positive perceptions about foreign socioeconomic conditions, and in particular, the overestimation of foreign economic conditions, are significantly correlated with a lower evaluation of China and the Chinese government. Further research confirms that the causal effects between misinformation about foreign countries and domestic attitudes are at least partially from the former to the latter. Thus, while conventional wisdom tells us that gaining knowledge about advanced democracies should lead to dissatisfaction with an authoritarian government and the subsequent undertaking of political action, HUANG suggests that reality may sometimes be the opposite: knowing more about foreign countries may lead to greater satisfaction with one's own country. Moreover, HUANG stresses that not only is political knowledge important in shaping public opinion, but so is socioeconomic knowledge.

In the last presentation, CHAU compares and contrasts the strategies that two influential public figures in the Chinese cyber-media - the pop culture icon and writer Han Han and the artist-activist Ai Weiwei- have taken on to define the relationship between themselves, the masses, and the state. While Han Han is known as a high-school dropout, a racecar fanatic, a musician, and just your "normal guy with independent thoughts," Ai Wei Wei is considered a rebel artist who blurs art with politics and crosses lines with the Chinese government. CHAU suggests that Han Han's populist approach has made him a voice for the people and shielded him from the government persecution that has plagued Ai Weiwei. However, CHAU asserts that this populist approach has also prevented Han Han from receiving the same level of critical acclaim achieved by Ai Weiwei, who has been portrayed as the more conventional detached individual.



Session 2: Deregulation and China's Energy Market

Chair: Junjie ZHANG, Assistant Professor, IR/PS, UC San Diego

WU reviews some of the main ecological problems China faces today in its path toward economic development, as well as the policy measures that the government has undertaken to foster ecologically sustainable development. According to WU, China faces various forms of industrial pollution in its water and air. Among them, the rise in carbon emission is especially alarming. In 2007, China contributed to 20 percent of the world's total carbon dioxide emission and overtook the U.S. to become the world's biggest emitter. Steps that the Chinese government has undertaken toward energy conservation and emission reduction include resorting to alternative energy resources (e.g. substituting electricity for coal) and developing flexible policy mechanisms that adapt to China's cross-regional and cross-industrial variations in energy consumption. One key hinder in China's pollution management mechanism, states WU, is the bureaucracy associated with government-run environmental protection agencies. One new strategy aimed at overcoming such stagnation is to give private companies subsidies to promote alternative energy production. WU asserts that this is expected to not only reduce pollution, but also stimulate China's economic growth through the creation of new markets for technological development.



Session 3: Labor Supply and Rural-Urban Migration in China

Chair: Lei GUANG, Director of 21st Century China Program, and Associate Director of Fudan-UC Center on Contemporary China

Providing reliable labor market statistics, and especially statistics on labor force participation and unemployment, has always been a challenge for government agencies. CHENG states that the two sources that the Chinese government currently uses to estimate the rate of unemployment in China, one based on unemployment registration and the second based on labor force survey, both have significant drawbacks. Using the registration-based rate of unemployment runs the risk of under/overestimation of true employment rates, while conducting survey-based unemployment research is very costly. CHENG introduces a new, simple, model-based measure of unemployment. CHENG believes that this is a reliable, low cost, and efficient means toward understanding China's messy labor market dynamics. Under this model, CHENG is able to identify and estimate pure labor supply preferences as well as one's probability of obtaining a job by using only micro-data on employment, wage, non-labor income and other individual characteristics. Based on his simulations, CHENG derived several policy implications. First, the group in need of the most government attention consists of people who demonstrate a strong willingness to work but face few employment opportunities (e.g. married women with young



children who come from poor families and have less education). Second, the government should closely track the young and lowly educated because their market competitiveness will weaken over time even if their willingness-to-work increases as they age. Third, CHENG suggests that the government can affect individuals' desire to work by controlling for marriage patterns and the timing of childbearing.

Shifting gears from employment to citizenship, Li's work examines the "point system," which is a new access system the Chinese government has implemented with the goal of granting urban citizenship to select migrants. In the past thirty years, China experienced more than 30 percent increase in rural to urban migration. The state is currently struggling with the management of this huge population flow. China's hukou system has a long tradition and history dating back to the 1950s. Hukou provides one with access to basic welfare such as healthcare or public schooling in one's location of residence. Traditionally, rural dwellers without urban hukou could not live in urban areas. More than just a registration system, the hukou system was a primary means of population management, control, and planning for the state. Although the abolishment of the hukou system has been in discussion in recent years, the state also recognizes the infeasibility of implementing such a large change over a short time span. A more gradual means to resolve this issue is the selective granting of hukou to a small group of people under a new system known as the point system. Under this system, each city municipal gives point allocations to a select number of desirable traits and characteristics. Individuals are required to achieve a certain number of points before getting their hukou. Under this system, migrants with particular desirable characteristics such as high educational achievement or financial capital attainment may be granted hukou in the locals of their choice. Li asserts that, while the point system relieves some of the pressure surrounding rural to urban migration, it does so at

the cost of perpetuating inequality. Many migrant construction workers in low wage sectors who score poorly under the point system continue to be denied access to urban welfare, despite their contribution to urban development.

In Qian's exploration of Chinese popular media representations of migrant workers in the 1980s and 1990s, she finds that stories of female migrants are becoming increasingly popular while stories centering male migrants have been largely absent. Qian explores this phenomenon through her in-depth analysis of three influential Chinese hit-television series from the 1980s and 1990s: *Girls from Mt. HUANGshan* (1985), *Girls from Out of Town* (1991), and *Sisters' Ventures in Beijing* (1995). In these gendered tales of urban adventures, the female leads are portrayed as the empowered guards, enlighteners, and pioneers of China's rural to urban migration movement, while the migrant men are either struggling with their loss of socioeconomic status or absent all together. Qian suggests that, in light of China's socio-economic transformation and path toward globalization, the state-sponsored popular media adopted these new female images in order to create new discourses of feminism, nationalism, and socialist values.

In the final presentation on this panel, LIU explores Chinese women's out-migration to Western countries via marriage. This phenomenon is puzzling, given that men in China under the age of 20 currently exceed females by more than 32 million. Set against the backdrop of China's post-socialist transition, LIU examines why Chinese women seek foreign husbands, as well as how commercial intermediaries facilitate their outmigration via marriage. LIU presents her ethnographic study of China-based matchmaking agencies that provide 20,000 or more Chinese women with access to more than 900,000 Western men online. The women in her study do not speak English and rely on staff at their matchmaking agencies to translate their email exchanges as well as arrange for the in-person meetings when the men travel to China to visit their potential brides. LIU asserts that over 70% of the clients in her study are middle-aged, divorced, and their common desire to leave China is fueled by the marginalization of middle-aged women in today's Chinese dating market. LIU explains how commercial intermediaries utilize new technology and human capital (e.g. their knowledge of China's youth dating culture) to create what she calls the "new erotics of international cyber-dating," as well as the social, cultural, and economic repercussions of these new erotic practices on China and the West.



Session 4: Healthcare Provision and Health Security in China

Chair: Chris CONNERY, Professor, Department of Literature, UC Santa Cruz

The relations between doctors and patients in China have deteriorated drastically over the last 20 years, asserts ZHAN. Today, medical professionals have come to bear the brunt of their patients' frustration and anger, as patients become confronted with rising health-care costs and unethical medical practices. Some medical professionals have even been subjected to rampant acts of violence including beating and murder, says ZHAN. Given the increasing dangers that doctors in China's rapidly shifting healthcare landscape face today, ZHAN suggests that the conventional portrayal of patients as the "weak" social group and medical professionals as its powerful counterpart to be far too simplistic. ZHAN directs our attention toward the hit Chinese medical TV-series "Angel Heart." In China, this television drama has been credited with the fostering of mutual understanding between medical professionals and the general public. ZHAN suggests that the filmmakers achieved such mediation by humanizing medical professionals as common people who share the same troubles and concerns as their patients and viewers. Moreover, ZHAN asserts that ironically, it is through the filmmakers' exploration into the concept of death, and especially the challenge of deaths that doctors face in their personal lives, that a partial reconciliation has been achieved amongst doctors, patients, and viewers.

Next, Fei presents her research on the effectiveness of community recovery programs in drug users' recovery outcomes. Fei states that currently, injection drug use contributes to approximately 40% of all HIV/AIDS cases in China. While China has traditionally sentenced drug users to prison-like compulsory rehabilitation facilities, the rate of relapse after rehabilitation remains high (80-95 percent). In response to the high rates of HIV/AIDS among injection drug users and the inefficiency of the punitive approach, says Fei, China has recently adopted a community recovery strategy. Fei's investigates the effectiveness of the Recovery Management Intervention (RMI) program on Chinese heroine users with regard to their utilization of community resources and recovery outcomes upon their release from compulsory rehabilitation. Fei drew her data from a larger scale study that randomly assigned 100 heroin users released from compulsory rehabilitation centers to the community in Shanghai, China. Her results showed a positive relationship between RMI

and participants' service utilization and recovery outcomes. Thus, Fei suggests that RMI is a promising strategy that can assist drug users in their reintegration into the community. Nevertheless, Fei reminds us that larger scale trial of the RMI program is necessary before its extensive application in China.



Evening Program

Tribute: Remembering UCLA Professor Rick Baum and His Contribution to China Studies

Delivered by: Clayton DUBE, Executive Director, USC US-China Institute

“There are many people here today who had the privilege of knowing and working with Richard Baum first hand. They can testify to his love of life, his appreciation for family and friends, and his robust sense of humor. They know of his passion for food, his love of sports, and his desire to explore.” DUBE opens the evening panel with memories of the late Richard Baum, former professor of political science at UCLA, director of

the UCLA Center for Chinese Studies, and China watcher. DUBE reminds us that Baum played a key role in maintaining UCLA's linkages with Chinese universities, including Fudan University, after June 4, 1989. After Baum's fall 1989 meeting with Fudan's president and Shanghai's mayor at the time, UCLA took Baum's recommendation for continued links with Fudan and other Chinese universities. DUBE states that over the course of Baum's career, he had always been a staunch advocate of deepening exchanges so as to enhance understanding and, hopefully, find solutions to problems in the Sino-U.S. relationship. DUBE tells us that Baum was a frequent contributor to Asian Survey and the founder of Chinapol, an interactive electronic forum where scholars, journalists, diplomats, policy analysts, and other professional China watchers from more than 20 countries exchange information, ideas, and insights about Chinese society and politics. Baum was also a remarkable teacher and a meticulous scholar who brought to light the underpinnings of Chinese elite politics. DUBE said that Baum is the scholar, teacher, and program builder whom we have all benefitted from.



Keynote Address: China's Growing Population: Current Trends and Future Challenges

Delivered by: PENG Xizhe, Associate Dean of Fudan Development Institute, and Director of the State Innovative Institute for Public Management and Public Policy Studies, Fudan University

PENG Xizhe, one of China's foremost demographers, ends the conference with a keynote speech that reviews the current trends and future challenges of China's growing population. According to the 2010 population census, China currently has a population of 1.3 billion. Since the 1950s, China has been experiencing high birthrate and low mortality rate, states PENG. Despite tragic events such as the Great Leap

Forward of 1958-1962 or the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976, the nation eventually recovered and population growth continued to soar. In order to achieve the goal of 1000 USD GDP per capita by 2000, says PENG, in 1979 the Chinese government introduced the one-child policy. Under this policy, urban residents could only have one child while rural residents were allowed no more than two. Consequently, abnormal sex ratios began to appear in 1980s. While the natural sex ratio should be 100 girls to 105 boys, says PENG, by 2010 China had 30 million surplus men in proportion to women. This abnormality is largely caused by selective abortion of female babies, states PENG. Another problem China faces in light of the “one-child policy,” says PENG, is the growing elderly population in proportion to the decreasing number of young people in the workforce. How will the upcoming “marriage squeeze” and the aging issue affect China's future social stability? Moreover, what will be the fate of the 100 million urban children and 14 million rural children from “one-child” families who grew up without siblings? Will they be individualistic, self-centered, and compulsive? Much remains unknown and PENG hopes that the younger generation will find its own clever solution. PENG voices his own support for the abolishment of the one-child policy. Moreover, PENG believes that institutional reform in other areas such as education or the labor force is needed in order to deal with the challenge of China's rising population.