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**Ideo-Political Education in China's Universities: A Study of the  
Challenges since the 1990s**

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## **Ideo-Political Education in China's Universities: A Study of the Challenges since the 1990s**

We are living in a time of dramatic and far-reaching challenges. Today's world is structured by contradictory social processes. There are powerful pressures towards the fragmentation of large political units, regional autonomy, localism and nationalism, while simultaneously there are strives for globalisation and unification (Ichilov, 1998, p. 1). The dramatic sea changes of world situation especially since the 1990s have again brought political education into spotlight, echoing its 'bull market' in the 1950s and the 1970s. Under this scenario, ideological education in China deserves our special attention. As one of the few communist countries in the present world, China has long been seen as a propaganda state. A core part of its Leninist one-party system of government is the indisputable official ideology (Walder, 1986; Schurmann, 1968), which has been the dominant content of ideological education in Chinese universities, known as indoctrination, brain wash, propaganda and totalitarianism in Western scholarship. Lynch (1999) defines this as thought work, which was formerly used to denote efforts by party-state cadres at the lowest rungs of society to impart 'correct' understanding of state policy in highly controlled small study groups (Whyte, 1979, 1974).

Since China's adoption of the Open Door policy in the late 1970s, profound changes have taken place rapidly in social, political and economic aspects of the Chinese society. Such ongoing changes have increasingly jeopardized China's ideological education in universities. While there has been substantial research on social change and education in China, little has been done to understand how Chinese government struggles to legitimise its constantly changing official ideologies through political education. This paper aims to contribute to filling the gap with a focus on the challenges faced by the ideological education in Chinese universities since the 1990s. It examines the impacts of some contextual factors within Chinese higher education reforms, *inter alia*, the introduction of the market, on the contemporary ideological education in Chinese universities.

### **Historical Heritages**

Discussions about ideological education in Chinese universities touch upon a variety of issues including political, ideological, moral, value, citizenship and the current situation education (Li, et al., 1990). Researchers thus use different terms and place their foci differently. Ideological education in Chinese universities is implemented both by formal programs (obligatory and elective courses) and non-formal activities. The most prominent part of such education includes two undergraduate teaching units: *Marxist Theory* and *Ideology and Morality*. They are compulsory for all students, and the titles, contents, syllabi, outlines and teaching hours are all decided by the central government. Each university has specific fulltime staff to teach and administrate these programs. Different from Western political discourse, these courses publicly claim their purpose to bind China's populace to a certain ideology (Chu, 1977). Such a unique practice has its deep roots in its historical heritages and has further developed itself within the recent decades.

Why does the communist Chinese government that came into power in 1949 want to offer courses on Marxist theory in higher learning institutions? What is the main content of such programs? Answers to these questions cannot avoid three historical facts: (1) China adopted learning from Russia as its modernisation model of socialist construction model; (2) the communist Party acquired much experience in ideological work during wartime; (3) China had rich traditions of ethical politics. When the then deputy education minister Qian Jun-rui talked about the future of education in December 1949, he stressed the rationale for borrowing three types of experience to build up education in the newly established the People's Republic of China (PRC): the good experience of new education accumulated in

'liberated areas' (where occupied by the communist Party during wartime), some beneficial experience from the old Chinese (traditional) education and the advanced Soviet experience (Yu, 1994, p. 45).

### ***Learning from Russia***

In the past one and half centuries since the Opium Wars, China has long been in a state of war and upheaval. Resisting foreign aggression, saving the nation from subjugation and ensuring its survival has already been the predominant theme. History of this period has deeply influenced the present national mindset and culture (Deng, 1999). After the WWII, the United States and the then Soviet Union competed to impose their modernisation models to other parts of the world, especially to the Third World, each with its own mission to 'civilise' others (Jin, 1999). The PRC was isolated by the US-led West and was further pushed to lean to the Soviet by the Korean War (Gittings 1993; Spence, 1999). Meanwhile the experience that the Soviet Union rapidly achieved industrialisation and turned to be a strong rival of the United States fascinated Chinese leaders, intellectuals and populace.

Learning from Russia was characterised by a highly centralised system that existed only under the special circumstances of war and revolution. It used national force to concentrate human, financial and material resources on the defence and development of state power. Ideologically, Marxism and Leninism were designated as the guiding theories of nation-building, with focal emphasis on the role of class struggle in its promotion of historical development. Through using force and revolution, all private properties were confiscated and totally controlled by the Party (Yu, 1991). The ethics and ideologies held by the Party then changed from those of an ordinary political Party to become undeniably universally applicable (Liu, 1998).

Within this context, courses of Marxist theories constitute a major part of the socialist ideological education in schools at all levels and in universities. According to an editorial appeared with *People's Daily* on 11 October 1949, ten days after the establishment of the PRC, the offering of such courses symbolised the remoulding of the old universities to build new ones that belonged to Chinese people (The National Institute of Educational Research, 1984, pp. 3-4). Learning from the Russian experience to offer courses on Marxism was therefore regarded as a glorious political task. Students in higher education were required to internalise a whole set of Marxist and Leninist ideological-political attitudes and values to become good subjects of the communist ruler with permitted behaviours, specific beliefs and strong loyalty.

*The Guanyu Gaodeng Xuexiao Makesi Liening Zhuyi Maozedong Sixiang Kecheng De Zhishi* (Instructions on Courses of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Ze-dong Thought in Higher Education Institutions) issued by the Ministry of Education on 7 October 1952 required universities, based on the three component parts of Marxism as well as on the then international and domestic political and economic situation, offer *On New Democracy* (renamed as *History of Chinese Revolution* since 17 July 1953), *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, *Political Economy* and *Foundations of Marxism and Leninism* (see Table 1 below). This document also demanded that political guidance section be set up with fulltime instructors. Since then, ideological-political education in Chinese universities had specific institutional framework, personnel and programs.

**Table 1: Teaching Hours of Marxist Theory Programs at Chinese Higher Education Institutions in 1952**

	<i>On new Democracy</i>	<i>Foundations of Marxism and Leninism</i>	<i>Political Economy</i>	<i>Dialectical and Historical Materialism</i>	<i>Total Teaching Hours</i>
Comprehensive and teachers training universities	100	136	136	100	472
Specialised institutions	100	136	136		372
Three-year specialised colleges	100	136	136		372
Two-year specialised colleges	100	136	136		372
One-year training programs	100				100

Source: *China Education Yearbook* Editorial Committee, 1984, p. 422.

There were some modifications to the courses as situation changed. For example, *Foundations of Marxism and Leninism* gradually changed into *History of International Communist Movement*, *History of Chinese Revolution* was renamed as *History of the Chinese Communist Party*. These courses flaunted Marxism, Leninism and Mao Ze-dong thought, advocated the cult of personality and upheld one-party system. At the same time, it expressed strong hostility towards other ideologies, and adopted historical materialism to interpret human history, with a special focus on the role of class struggle. By so doing, it legitimised the existing ruling system and ideology.

Seen from the 'long-term rationality of history' and the 'macro-history' promoted by Huang Ren-yu (1995, 1997), the strategic adoption of learning from Russia by the newly founded Republic was a rational choice. From the outset, the courses on Marxist theories in Chinese universities had its brand of the sharp ideological conflicts during the Cold War, Leninist indoctrination and socialist political propaganda.

### ***The Chinese Communist Party's Wartime Experience in Ideo-Political Work***

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) acquired much experience in ideo-political education during its longstanding armed struggle under arduous conditions. By setting up Party branches at lower levels in its army, and through effective thought work in armed forces and

among the masses, the Party successfully achieved full control over armed forces and won wide, sincere support for the Party and its leadership from the masses. The Party's centralised leadership then started to take shape.

Such experience has profoundly influenced the ideo-political education at Chinese universities after 1949. Administratively, the Party committee's leadership has been institutionalised to ensure the socialist nature of higher education. Strategically, great reliance has been placed on cadres. Selected cadres are trained first and then sent into the midst of students and influence them (Qu, 1985, p. 72). Educationally, the Party's basic line, guiding principle and policies as well as the current political situation constitute major parts of ideo-political education curriculum.

The communist Party's centralised leadership was then further strengthened and even absolutised. From 1949 to 1952, the new communist government took over universities from the previous government and religious agencies. The communist Party had had little influence within these institutes. First by appointing new presidents, the government sought to secure its tight control over the ideo-political education in these universities. Then, the government set up a specific political guidance section in each university. According to the *Guangyu zai Gaodeng Xuexiao Youzhongdian di Shixing Zhengzhi Gongzhuo Zhidu de Zhishi* (Instructions on Experimenting Political Work System Focally in Higher Education Institutions) issued by the Ministry of Education in October 1952, there was an urgent need to establish political work system in universities.

The document required higher education institutions nationwide set up political guidance sections. Major tasks of these sections were to lead all staff and students to learn political theories, to coordinate with Dean's office to guide the teaching of Marxist and Leninist theories, to oversee social activities of all teachers and students, to keep abreast of any new political attitudinal development of teachers and students, to retain their personal files, to preside over student assessment and job assignment, and to participate in staff's recruitment, promotion and bonus-penalty. The section represented the Party to exercise its political power within higher education institutions to build up a governing rule of patron-client interchange between the state/Party and university intellectuals in order to achieve the Party's political control over the latter (Lo, 1991).

By the mid-1950s, in consideration of the fact that the Party's institutional framework had been gradually publicised and the Party committee established in universities, and that many university leaders were Party members, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CCP noticed universities that political guidance sections could be withdrawn.

Cadre training was a high priority and successful strategy of the communist Party during wartime. In late 1930s, Mao Ze-dong was directly involved. In the 1940s, a number of higher education institutions were established in the areas occupied by the communist troops including the Party School of the Central Committee of the CCP and the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political University.

The tradition was carried forward after 1949. A typical example is the People's University of China whose establishment was approved by the then Government Administration Council on 16 December 1949, two months after the PRC was founded. The University has been designated to train communist cadres at different levels in various areas of propaganda work, party affairs and ideo-political education. After receiving some training at the University, these cadres were dispatched to all parts of China engaged in teaching Marxist theories. On 28 October 2001, the Secretary of the Party Committee at the University proudly declared that 60 per cent of teachers of *Marxist Theory and Ideology and*

*Morality* nationwide had been trained by the University. Five graduates from the University had served as Vice President of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CCP (Au Yeung, 2002). It is in this sense that Ruth Hayhoe refers the University as a new *Hanlin Academy* (Hayhoe, 1996).

While teaching contents of ideo-political education were centred on Marxist theories and ideologies, efforts were always made to relate them to the current political situation. For example, soon after the Korean War broke out in June 1950, the Ministry of Education mapped out new plans and requirements for ideo-political education in universities, with the focus on the War to Resist US Aggression and Aid Korea (1950-1953). The new task was to "oppose new fascist ideologies, eliminate all pernicious American imperialist influence and colonial enslave comprador ideologies (Gong, 1997, pp. 3-4).

In addition to the aforementioned origins, the cotemporary ideo-political education in China's higher education has also been greatly influenced by the political traditions of Chinese culture. For thousands of years in Chinese history, education was monopolised by the state. Indeed education was a privilege of the elite, a phenomenon commonly referred to as *xuezaiguanfu*. Teachers were officials, and vice versa. The only purpose of receiving education was to become an official. Teachers were required not only to pass on knowledge but also to cultivate students. The latter was considered far more important. Such an education was a major means to infiltrate traditional values into every aspect of the society.

## **Content Change in Ideo-political Education since 1949**

### ***The "Old Three" and the People's University: 1949-1966***

As noted above, China's learning from Russia to offer programs on Marxist theories was a political move. For decades, despite some modifications to course titles and teaching hours, the main contents remained largely unchanged, with courses ranging from *Marxist Philosophy, Marxist Political Economy, Scientific Socialism, History of International Communist Movement, History of the Chinese Communist Party to Political Current Affairs*. Among them, *Marxist Political Economy, Marxist Philosophy and History of the Chinese Communist Party* had experienced least change till the 1990s, normally known as the "Old Three" within the circle in China.

On 10 September 1951, the Ministry of Education issued its instructions to all universities requiring that courses of ideo-political education be included in each department's syllabi paralleling specialised subjects, and assessed by the Dean. Since then, ideo-political education courses have become an integrated part of university curricula, campus-wide electives for students of all specialties.

Both the offering and administration of these programs were a direct result of learning from Russia. The learning went much further. Russian 'experts' were invited to teach Marxist theories in Chinese campuses, and to set up good examples for such learning. The People's University of China was one of the two examples. In addition to training personnel specialised in ideo-political education noted above, its major tasks also included compiling teaching outlines, syllabi and textbooks of the "Old Three".

From 1950 to 1957, the People's University invited 98 Russian scholars to train Chinese teachers, lecture to postgraduate students and guide Chinese colleagues to upgrade their teaching materials and methods, improve research capacity, deepen theoretical understanding and even participate into teaching administration. During the period, these

Russians compiled 101 textbooks, trained 2,574 postgraduate students [among them 2,021 (78.5%) majored in four ideo-political subjects: *Marxist Philosophy, Principles of Marxist Political Economy, Scientific Socialism* and *History of International Communist Movement*].

In 1952, The Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CCP suggested a training program officially set up at the People's University to provide teachers for Marxist theory courses in universities nationwide. The then Ministry of Higher Education hosted a symposium to summarise and discuss specifically the University's experience in teaching Marxist theories with an aim to spread the experience to other universities. Since then, the People's University has always been highly valued by Chinese national leaders for its specialised training in Marxist theory (see, for example, Li, 16 October 2000, p. 1; Chen, 17 October 2000, pp. 1-2). It has been a national base for teacher training and a cradle of theorists in this field of academic enquiry.

### ***A Break in the Regular Teaching of Marxist Theory: 1966-1976***

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (May 1966-October 1976) was resulted from the ultra-Left trend of thought in the CCP. While ideo-political education and class struggle were the central task, systematic teaching of Marxist theory was suspended. It was a further development of China's isolation from the outside world especially after its split with the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Most Chinese people's perceptions of the world environment were greatly influenced by their feeling of victim of foreign aggression and constant threat. Their judgement of foreigners was either those who collaborated with them or those who fought against them.

This mindset was reflected on ideo-political education in higher education institutions. Much content was added to criticise modern revisionism. Meanwhile, there was a tendency to create their contemporary God. Regular teaching of Marxist political theories was cancelled, replaced by political movements (class struggle), which was also regarded as daily political thought work (Li, 1981, p. 32). Quick-witted application of Mao Ze-dong thought displaced regular teaching of political theories in universities. Class struggles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie and between socialism and capitalism became the core of all university curricula (Guo, 2000, pp. 74-75).

### ***The "New Three": 1978-1989***

Starting from October 1976, it was in education that Deng Xiao-ping and the 'pragmatist' faction first began to reverse Maoist policies and set China on a more rational, economic-oriented path to modernisation. One of the first tasks undertaken was restoration of the education system (Reed, 1988). Although Deng's reform agenda was officially inaugurated at the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee held in December 1978, changes in the education sector had preceded it. At a meeting with leaders from the Ministry of Education in September 1977, Deng urged them to restore the practice at universities during the 1949-1966 period in the name of reform. The National Education Work Conference in April 1978 decided to re-establish ideo-political education under the leadership of the Party Committee at each institution. In June the Ministry of Education organised a conference in Wuhan to draft *Gaijin he Jiaqiang Gaodeng Xuexiao Makesh Zhuyi Lilunke de Shixing Banfa* (Proposed Measures to Reform and Strengthen Courses of Marxist Theories at Higher Education Institutions), which was formally issued on 7 July 1980. It required universities definitely to resume Marxist theory education including *Philosophy, Political Economy* and *History of the Chinese Communist Party*. Again, these courses were made compulsory for students of all disciplines.

**Table 2: Teaching Hours of Marxist Theory Programs at  
Chinese Higher Education Institutions in 1980**

<b>Student Specialties</b>	<b><i>History of the Chinese Communist Party</i></b>	<b><i>Political Economy</i></b>	<b><i>Philosophy (Dialectical and Historical Materialism)</i></b>	<b><i>History of International Communist Movement/Scientific Socialism</i></b>	<b>Total Teaching Hours</b>
Arts and Social Sciences	105	105	105	105	420
Science, Technology, Agriculture and Medicine	70	70	70		210

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed many pressing problems that urged people to reflect on their causes. University students began to lose confidence in the communist leadership and furthermore to question Marxism, Leninism and Mao Ze-dong thought (Rosen, 1989). A belief crisis then prevailed (Yang, 1997).

The government was shocked to see the disappointment expressed by young university students in its leadership and in its guiding ideologies. One of its measures to deal with the situation was to offer a new course, *Communist Ideology and Morality*, which aimed at providing practical solutions to daily issues faced by young students.

It did not take long for the government and universities to realise *Communist Ideology and Morality* often failed to achieve its goals (Chen and Wu, 1998; Zhao, 1993; Zhou and Fu, 1995). New measures were taken to modify the course. Concurrently, *Foundations of the Law* was added to the course in late 1987 and made compulsory to all students irrespective of grade and discipline. This move was designated to meet increasing calls for building a legal society, as China's economic growth remained rapid and strong (Au Yeung, 2002).

The Chinese government understood that by simply resuming teaching Marxist theories and by adding courses like *Communist Ideology and Morality* and *Foundations of the Law* would not suffice to tackle young students' belief crisis. Within this context, more substantial modification to the courses was needed. Emphasis was on the link between Marxist principles and China's actuality to build up the so-called socialism with Chinese characteristics. On 1 August 1985, the CCP Central Committee issued *Guanyu Gaige Xuexiao Sixiang Pingde he Zhengzhi Lilun Kecheng Jiaoxue de Tongzhi* (Notice of Teaching Reforms in Courses of Ideology and Morality and Political Theories in Universities) to officially require universities to change from the "Old Three" to the "New Three" (*Basic Principles of Marxism, Chinese Socialist Construction and History of Chinese Revolution*).

Changing *History of the Chinese Communist Party* into *History of Chinese Revolution* aimed to demonstrate the great achievement under the Communist Party by showing the failure of the democratic revolution of the old type led by Dr. Sun Yat-san and by downplaying the



internal dissensions within the Party. It tried to prove that the Communist Party's chosen path to socialism was solidly based on China's rich cultural traditions and on the inexorable historical trend of human society. *Chinese Socialist Construction* attempted to justify theoretically the policy and practice of building China into a modernised socialist country with Chinese characteristics. *Basic Principles of Marxism* is a restructuring of the previous *Philosophy, Scientific Socialism, History of Communist Movement and Political Economy*.

The transformation from the "Old Three" to the "New Three" was a summary of the reform in ideo-political education at Chinese universities. What deserves our special attention is that the courses began to pay attention to introducing and analysing other contemporary trends of thought (Peng, 1986, p. 3). This showed that some careful efforts had been made to implement changes to the knowledge structure of ideo-political education in Chinese universities, including a somewhat altered attitude towards the current philosophical thinking in Western societies.

### **New Challenges since the 1990s**

Ideo-political education in Chinese universities faces a number of serious challenges from the immediate environment within higher education, from the wider society and from the external international setting. It is in an increasingly awkward position: while it is determined to stick to its original targets, still relying heavily on its old teaching contents and ways of delivery, new contextual changes have raised knotty issues. China's recent accession to the World Trade Organization and the exponential use of the Internet for example are further severe tests. Despite that great efforts have been made, ideo-political education feels increasingly difficult.

#### ***Challenge 1: Market forces into Higher Education***

Since the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the impact of economic globalisation and weakening of the state have created immense pressures for the structuring of the state. With increasing constraints on public expenditure, the public management today is much more concerned with how to reduce cost, or at least to prevent it from continuing to rise. Such concerns have inevitably changed the nature of government from service providers to regulators. Governments have changed from a 'primary hierarchical decommodifying agent' to a 'primary market-based commodifying agent' (Cerny, 1996, p. 256). The state has been transformed from maximising general welfare to maximising returns on investment.

This is also the case in China. Chinese universities now encounter many challenges and are financially subject to an unprecedented level of external scrutiny. Stringent government budgets have inevitably created much pressure on universities to search for additional funding sources. The measure adopted include a user-pay principle, generating income from university-industry contract research, engaging in consultancy services, seeking endowments or donations from the private sector and offering profit-making courses.

Under the strong tide of managerialism, Chinese universities have become more managerialist and bureaucratic in nature (Currie, 1998). This global tide of managerialism has accelerated the movement of faculty and universities towards the market and the commodification of knowledge (Gibbons, 1998). It becomes increasingly popular that China's higher education is linked with commercial and industrial sectors in terms of knowledge production and innovation.

These changes have problematised the longstanding relationship between the state, universities and their members inherited from the planned system, in which the government

played the role as the patron. This was fairly effective when the state was the sole provider of resources. Once political performance was an important, powerful criterion for staff and student assessment at universities. Those who are involved in university ideo-political education today feel they have lost their power. What upsets these people even more is the heightened link between professional knowledge/kills and the market, due to their inability to benefit financially from this trend.

Their awkward position is only further strengthened as China's higher education institutions receive less allotments proportionately from the government and universities have to rely more and more on their technoscience and fields closely involved with the market. Despite some minor differences given by researchers as they calculate differently, this trend is quite evident as shown by Tables 3 and 4 below:

**Table 3: Funding Structure at Chinese Universities in 1995, 1998 and 2000**

	<b>1995</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>2000</b>
Proportion of government allotments	70%	64%	56%
Proportion of university-raised funds	30%	36%	44%
Total (billion Chinese yuan)	262.29	544.80	904.43

Source: Hu and Chen, 2001, p. 53.

**Table 4: Changes of Funding Structure in Chinese Higher Education (selected years from 1978 to 1997, %)**

<b>Sources</b>	<b>1978</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
Government allotments	95.9	87.7	86.9	81.8	73.57	70.05	67.62
University-raised funds	4.1	12.3	13.1	18.2	26.43	29.95	32.38
Revenue from university -	4.1	10.3	10.7	12.8	8.30	8.73	8.73

run enterprises and services to society							
Donations		0.2	0.7	0.8	6.24	6.81	7.93
Tuition and fees	0.0	1.8	2.9	4.6	11.89	14.41	15.72

Source: Zhong, 2000.

University students in China were once assigned jobs at their graduation. To a great extent this was a political exercise as their political performances played a crucial role in it. By the late 1990s, this system had largely disappeared. Students are now required to find jobs by themselves.

The market has also become significant in deciding university academics' income. In the planned economy, university lecturers were comparatively well paid in China. Their income became ridiculously poor when China began to implement market economy in the 1980s and early 1990s. Yet, established scholars, especially professors and Doctoral advisors, started to receive high income since the mid-1990s. Universities all have their own salary bonus system that again is directly linked to professional ranks. This, however, does not create many winners in ideo-political education, as most people in this field do not have senior titles.

### **Challenge 2: Attitudinal Changes of University Students**

A vast amount of data have shown substantial changes in Chinese university students' attitudes towards family, society and values, despite constant calls for extra care about the validity of such data (Bai, 1998; Rosen, 1993, 1991, 1989). A more valid method would be to triangulate a variety of research findings based on different sources of data. The following analysis of political attitudes and life style among the contemporary Chinese university students is based on five large-scale surveys conducted by various, independent and official, researchers: Zhang Cun-ku (2001) from Xi'an Jiaotong University, The Party Committee of Shanghai Municipal Government (2001), The Centre for Studies in Moral Education, China National Institute of Educational Research (1996), The Department of Social Science Research and Ideo-Political Work, Ministry of Education (2001) and the National Centre for Studies in Youth and Juveniles and the Communist Youth League of China (2000).

The first characteristic of contemporary university student culture is the tendency towards pragmatism and materialism. According to the National Centre for Studies in Youth and Juveniles and the Communist Youth League of China (2000), compared to 1996, there was a 14.2 per cent increase among Chinese youth believing in 'Money makes the mare go,' 9.3 per cent of Chinese university students constantly reminded themselves that 'Life is short,' which was 4.42 per cent more than that of 1996. This confirms the finding of the investigation by the Centre for Studies in Moral Education, China National Institute of Educational Research (1996, p. 18), which found 79.9 per cent university students considered themselves as 'extremely or very materially practical', while 84.4 per cent

thought 'a life without money would be unacceptable.' Such findings echo a number of studies published in English (see, for example, Bai, 1998; Yang 1997).

A survey conducted by the Faculty of Arts at Tsinghua University in 1997 found that many university students did not try to deny that their motive to become a member of the CCP was *not* due to their belief in communism, nor to the purpose of serving others and the society (Zhang, 2001). In line with this, salary became the overwhelmingly important factor in their choice of future professions. Some students even publicly acknowledged that their purpose to become a member of the Party was to better facilitate themselves to be more competitive in their hunting for jobs.

Secondly, the contemporary university students attach far more importance to their personal gains and development. They are becoming more politically independent and critical. According to the National Centre for Studies in Youth and Juveniles and the Communist Youth League of China (2000), 55.6 per cent of them 'like doing their things without worrying how others comment,' 38.4 per cent agreed with 'Be good to yourself,' which was 23.97 per cent more than that of 1996. Similarly, 84.25 per cent university students in Shanghai in 2001 considered themselves as 'very independent or independent,' 61.21 per cent students discussed personal issues with friends and classmates, only 0.19 per cent approached political organizations (which were meant to be in charge of this) for help (Lou, 2001).

Thirdly, while holding a variety of values is not at all rare among Chinese university students, the shift from altruism to hedonism is the most prominent. According to the Centre for Studies in Moral education, China National Institute of Educational Research (1996, pp. 15-16), at least 30 per cent students publicly expressed that they did not mind socialism or capitalism provided a materially rich life could be maintained, 29 per cent thought it remained undecided whether socialism or capitalism was better, and 35.1 per cent were not sure that the communist party was the right leader for China. The investigation in Shanghai found that 38 per cent did not believe socialism was superior to capitalism, and 42 per cent saw privatisation as China's only way to go (Lou, 2001, p. 81).

Last, but not least in importance, Chinese young students are positive about China's achievements in economic power and political influence in the international arena. Parallel to this, they are becoming increasingly pride of their nation. Findings from the survey by the National Centre for Studies in Youth and Juveniles and the Communist Youth League of China (2000) showed that 52.2 per cent and 45.1 percent respectively thought China had 'greatly' or 'much' improved its strength as one of the world economic and political powers. The Ministry of Education study discovered that students were paying much attention to domestic and international events, especially when these events were related to national sovereignty, benefits and security.

For instance, Shanghai survey found that 93 per cent students showed great interests in the performance of Chinese athletes at the Sydney Olympic Games, 90 per cent noticed the presidential election result in Taiwan, 88 per cent could tell the complicated situation of American presidential election, 84 percent welcomed the death sentence on two former high officials for their corruption, and 100 percent interview respondents expressed their indignation and the limit of their forbearance towards the American side in an incident in which a Chinese fighter collided with an American reconnaissance plane (Lou, 2001, p. 80). According to the report of the Centre for Studies in Moral Education, China National Institute of Educational Research (1996), 53.5 per cent students regarded the criticism of Chinese human right record by major Western nations as 'nonsense,' and 33.1 per cent did not care much and said the comments could be better used to correct mistakes if China had made any and guard against them if China had not.

### ***Challenge 3: Influences from External Sources***

Over the last decade or so, people have been talking about the impact of globalisation on economic, social and cultural fronts (Mok and Chan, 2002), despite that there is no single generally agreed definition of globalisation (Giddens, 1999). By globalisation, sociologists generally refer to the complex set of process which 'result from social interaction on a world scale, such as the development of an increasingly integrated global economy and the explosion of worldwide telecommunication' (Sklair, 1999, p. 321). Malcolm Waters (1995, p. 3) sees globalisation as 'a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding.'

Although much contested, globalisation is the continuation and further spread of Western modernity. Its sweeping influences especially threaten non-Western societies. Due to globalisation, the tendency to deterritorialisation in societies is becoming evident (Beck, 2000). Some traditional roles of nation states are being taken away from them to form so-called 'world ethics' and a 'cosmopolitan culture' (Smith, 1995, p. 8), and homogenisation (Fukuyama, 2001). Under this scenario, citizenship and citizen rights need to be re-examined (Appadurai, 1996, p. 10). Starting from T. H. Marshall's two Alfred Marshall Lectures in 1947 at Cambridge University to Anthony Giddens, M. Mann and B. Turner, theories on political socialisation and education have been built upon the territory, sovereignty and legitimacy of nation states. Willingly or unwillingly aside, these are all undermined by globalisation. Nation-state is buffeted and reworked by global pressures (Marginson, 1999, p. 19). Education is deeply involved in these destruction-establishment processes.

Meanwhile, it would be naïve to jump to the conclusion that people will easily abandon their traditional cultural roots especially at deeper levels. Questions are then spelt out: How can we maintain diversity and self-determination under the new global structure? How can we modify citizenship education in a specific nation state to reach global citizenship without losing our own identities? While there are no ready answers to these questions, one thing is for sure, that is, the content of citizenship has changed dramatically (Torres, 1999). The old model that stressed passing on political knowledge about society, politics and civil rights in order to achieve system-maintenance does not suffice, and will certainly be replaced by mass education for democracy citizenship. The role of students will change accordingly from passive targets of indoctrination to proactive participants (Gilbert, 1997; Braungart and Braungart, 1997).

The endless changes brought by globalisation seriously challenge the ideo-political education in Chinese universities as to how it can justify the Communist Party as the only legitimate leader against a background of China's increasing participation in international affairs and the all-pervasive Internet operating effectively in China. The Chinese government places its hope on economic development. To some extent, this can be explained by Huntington's proposition. As early as in 1991, Huntington pointed out that if a government could not justify its administrative power through democratic election, it would rely on its economic achievement to win such legitimacy. This was exactly the case when Deng Xiaoping started the Open Door policy in the late 1970s. This was also true for the current government, which is still using this strategy. However, evidences have warned that despite steady economic growth, a seemingly powerful autocratic government can hardly stand constant strikes, especially when it is related to corruption and collusion between its officials and businessmen.

## Conclusion

The ideo-political education practiced in Chinese universities is fairly China-specific. Fundamentally it was a result of the Cold War, mirroring the autarkic world order of the post-WWII years. It is also based on the traditional Chinese political culture. As the world is rapidly globalised and China increases its international participation, the discrepancy between the fundamental and instrumental levels of the Chinese official ideology has come to be prominent.

Since the 1990s, with the material socialist targets at developing production force, China's higher education has demonstrated increasing instrumental rationality and 'scientism'. Such a perception of knowledge, together with the introduction of the market into higher education and the changing attitudes of university students, has problematised the longstanding practice of ideo-political education in Chinese universities, which operated well for decades in the planned system against a context of the Cold War.

The communist Chinese government realises these issues and has implemented reforms in ideo-political education. The adjustment, far from aiming at transforming substantially the fundamental purpose, has been spontaneous and forced, based on the Party's judgement of the current changing situation, with the central theme to maintain political stability in China. Considering the complex domestic and international socio-political environment, the efficacy of such responses remains to be seen, and the road ahead for the ideo-political education in Chinese universities will certainly be bumpy.

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