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## UNDERSTANDING THE VALUES IN THE CHINESE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT: A POLICY ANALYSIS ON EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the values reflected in the Chinese Higher Education Act and other related laws. To understand these values, I carefully read and analysed relevant sections on education in the Chinese Constitution. Then I scrutinized the Higher Education Act. I also perused Chinese laws and regulations related to higher education. An attempt was made to compare the values expressed in the Chinese Higher Education Act and other laws with those in Ontario, Canada university acts to see what differences exist between them.

### Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to understand the values reflected in the Chinese Higher Education Act and other related laws. These values are explored through a variety of lenses including the juxtaposition of national and global perspectives with a consideration of national and global political interests. The second purpose of the study was to determine differences in values that exist between the Chinese Higher Education Act and Ontario, Canada university acts.

Recently, a global ideology characterized by effectiveness, efficiency, and quality underlies the higher education reforms in most countries (Cai, 2004). However, no pattern fits all national higher education systems, since every nation responds to global pressures differently. Specific global and national issues result in a variety of patterns demonstrating tensions between the global and the national. China is no exception (Cai, 2004). Economically, "China has risen from poverty to uneven but dynamic prosperity" (Gross, 2014, p. 70). CBS News (2014) reported that, according to the International Monetary Fund, China surpassed the U.S. as the world's largest economy when measured in purchasing power parity. Rudd (2015) assumes a Chinese economic growth rate in the medium to medium-high range (in excess of 6 percent) as probable for the next decade.

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China is the biggest contributor to peacekeeping missions among the UN Security Council's permanent five (The Economist, 2014). Chinese are participating in patrolling the international waters off the coast of Somali to prevent pirate attacks. Chinese also participated, for the first time, in the Rim of Pacific naval exercise led by the U.S. navy near Hawaii that involved warships from 22 countries. As Chinese are more involved in international affairs, there is a need for the world to have a better understanding of China. In conducting this study, I attempted to contribute toward a better understanding of the values reflected in the Chinese Higher Education Act and other related laws. With 34.6 million students in 2,788 higher education institutions (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2014), China has the largest higher education system in the world.

Increased attention has been accorded to the axiological dimensions of educational administration in recent years (Richmon, 2004). Since "value ranks among the most widely used analytic units in the social sciences and the humanities" (Horley, 2012, p. 161), understanding the values expressed, both explicitly and implicitly, in the laws that govern Chinese higher education is essential to understanding China itself. The values higher education institutions espouse, that may or may not be reflected through institutional ethics, can help to shape the moral contours of society-at-large (UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education, 2004). In addition, understanding these values may contribute to the effectiveness of Chinese higher education, as values theorists in educational administration agree that understanding organizational values is integral to organizational effectiveness (Mueller, 2014).

Before an examination of the Chinese Higher Education Act and other laws, a brief introduction of the Chinese higher education system is useful. If Confucius (551 - 479 BC) is considered the founding figure of Chinese education, its development has a history of over 2,500 years. However, during most of these 2,500 years education was a privilege only few could enjoy. In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded, and by 1953 all Chinese universities and colleges were changed into public institutions within a central planning system. The major mechanisms included governments allocating higher education resources, appointing university leaders, assigning jobs to graduates, and deciding enrollment numbers for individual institutions (Cai, 2004). For almost three decades the Chinese higher education participation rate stayed at about three percent of the relevant age group (Guo, 2011), much lower than that in developed countries.

In 1978 as China opened up, higher education began to develop at a speed that had never been seen before. Market mechanisms have been introduced, including diversification of financial resources, increasing autonomy for institutions, termination of specific job assignments for university graduates, and the emergence

of private institutions (Cai, 2004). The Chinese higher education participation rate increased from around 3 percent in 1978 (Guo, 2011) to 34.5 percent in 2013 (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2014). However, when compared with developed countries, the higher education participation rate in China is still low. The average tertiary type-A level education entry rate in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in 2011 was 60 percent (OECD, 2013). In June 2014 approximately 9 million Chinese took the higher education entry examination (Lin, Wu, Lu, & Zhang, 2014), but the Ministry of Education suggested that only about 7 million would be admitted into various programs in the fall (Zhao, 2014). It seems that part of the demand for higher education is not met by the current supply, and estimations indicate supply not meeting demand for the coming decade (Wei & Yuan, 2012).

### **Document Analysis as Inquiry Method**

The purpose of this study was to understand the values of higher education reflected in Chinese laws. The methodology consisted of document analysis that focused on the values reflected in Chinese laws governing higher education. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing documents (both printed and electronic materials) (Bowen, 2009). To understand the values in the related laws, I first scrutinized the Chinese Constitution, mainly its sections on education. Then I carefully read and analyzed the Chinese Higher Education Act. I also examined laws and regulations related to higher education. Among them, there are the Education Act, the Non-Public Education Promotion Act, and the Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Collaborative Education. Finally, I perused the Ontario College Act respecting public colleges and university acts respecting public universities in Ontario, Canada. I attempted to compare the values in Chinese laws with those in Ontario, Canada laws to see what differences exist between them. In addition, I reviewed literature related to values and ethics in higher education administration and linked policy analysis insights to an existing body of scholarship. The Chinese legislation and Ontario legislation I analyzed provide current and historical documentary data available through the websites of the Chinese People's Congress, the Ministry of Education, and the Ontario legislature.

### **The Chinese Higher Education Act and Other Related Laws**

The following paragraphs list sections in Chinese laws that reflect values and ideological statements I consider important for higher education. The Chinese Constitution Article 19 stipulates that the state undertakes the development of socialist education and works to raise the scientific and cultural level of the nation (Chinese National People's Congress, 2004). The state establishes and administers schools, universalizes compulsory

education, and promotes higher education. Additionally, the state develops facilities to provide political, scientific, technical, and professional education for workers, farmers, public employees, and other working people. Article 24 provides that the state facilitates the building of a socialist society with an advanced culture and ideology by promoting education in high ideals, ethics, general knowledge, discipline, and the legal system. The state advocates the civic virtues of loving the motherland, the people, work, science, and socialism. It conducts education in patriotism, collectivism, and internationalism. Article 46 stipulates that Chinese citizens have the duty as well as the right to receive education (Chinese National People's Congress, 2004).

The Education Act article 6 stipulates that the state shall provide education in patriotism, national defence, and national unity among ethnic groups. Article 7 states that education shall be carried out to inherit and develop the fine historical and cultural traditions of the nation and to absorb all the fine achievements of human civilization. Article 8 provides that the state implements the policy of separating education from religion. No organization or individual shall employ religion to engage in activities that obstruct the state education system (Chinese National People's Congress, 1995).

Article 9 states that citizens shall enjoy equal opportunities of education regardless of ethnicity, race, sex, occupation, property, and religious belief. Article 67 stipulates that the state encourages international exchange and cooperation; however, the principles of national independence, equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect shall be adhered to. Chinese laws shall not be violated, and the national sovereignty, security, and public interests shall not be harmed (Chinese National People's Congress, 1995).

The Higher Education Act article 1 indicates that the Act was enacted to develop higher education, implement the strategy of developing the country with science and education, and promote socialist material and ethical progress. Article 3 stipulates that the state adheres to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory (Chinese National People's Congress, 1998). Article 4 stipulates that higher education shall be conducted in adherence to the educational principles of the government, serve socialist modernization, and be connected to productive work, so that the educated shall be developed morally, intellectually, and physically in a comprehensive way. Article 5 provides that the task is to develop people to become advanced specialists with creativity and practical skills.

Article 8 provides that the state, in light of the unique needs of ethnic minority groups, assists the development of higher education in minority regions to educate advanced specialists among minority groups. Article 9 stipulates that citizens shall enjoy the right to receive higher education. The state takes measures to assist

students with financial difficulties to receive higher education. Institutions shall enrol disabled people that meet the admission requirements. Article 10 provides that the state ensures the freedoms of scientific research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural activities conducted in higher education institutions. These activities shall be conducted in compliance with law. Article 11 states that institutions shall make efforts to meet the needs of society, operate autonomously, and conduct democratic administration.

Article 24 stipulates that higher education institutions shall be established in accordance with the national plan for developing education; and institutions shall not be established for the purpose of making profit. Article 31 provides that institutions shall focus on identification and education for student talents, carry out teaching, conduct research, provide service to society, and ensure quality of education. Article 36 indicates that institutions shall autonomously conduct scientific, technological, and cultural exchange and cooperation with institutions outside of China.

Article 39 stipulates that in every public institution the president shall take overall responsibility under the leadership of the Communist Party committee. This committee shall exercise leadership over the work of the institution and support the president in exercising the presidency's powers independently and responsibly. The Party committee shall mainly perform the following duties: adhere to the policies of the Party, keep to the socialist orientation in administration, provide guidance in ideological work and moral education, decide on directors of departments of the institution, and ensure the fulfillment of all tasks centering on educating for student talents.

Article 42 provides that in every institution an academic committee shall be established to deliberate the disciplines offered and their teaching and research plans, and evaluate academic matters relating to teaching and research. Article 43 states that institutions shall, through the conference of employee representatives, guarantee that employees are involved in the democratic administration of institutions and safeguard their lawful rights and interests. Article 45 stipulates that employees shall enjoy the rights prescribed by law, fulfill the obligations set by law, and devote themselves to the cause of the people's education.

Article 53 states that students shall observe codes of conduct, respect instructors, work hard, learn to master the concepts of patriotism, collectivism, and socialism, diligently study Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory, have a sound ideology and character, and acquire a high level of scientific and cultural knowledge and specialized skills. The rights and interests of students shall be protected by law.

Article 60 says that the state institutes a system wherein government appropriations constitute the bulk of the funds for higher education, supplemented by funds raised through various avenues, to ensure that the development of higher education is appropriate for economic and social development. The State Council and governments of provinces shall ensure that funds for higher education increase gradually. The government encourages enterprises, organizations, and individuals to invest in higher education. Article 63 stipulates that earnings from education institution enterprises shall be used for the operation of institutions. Article 67 provides that individuals outside China, who meet government requirements and have completed the necessary procedures, may enter Chinese institutions to study, conduct research, participate in academic exchange, or teach, and their lawful rights and interests shall be protected by the government (Chinese National People's Congress, 1998).

The Non-Public Education Promotion Act article 1 indicates that this Act is formulated to promote the sound development of non-public schools and safeguard the rights and interests of these schools and their students. Article 3 states that non-public education is for the public good and constitutes a component of the socialist education cause. The government actively encourages and lawfully administers non-public education. Article 4 specifies that non-public schools shall abide by laws, implement the education principle of the government, guarantee their quality, and devote their efforts to educating talents for the cause of socialist development. Non-public schools shall implement the principle of separating education from religion (Chinese National People's Congress, 2002).

Article 5 stipulates that non-public schools and public schools have equal legal status, and the government safeguards the autonomy of non-public schools. The government protects the lawful rights and interests of non-public school operators, principals, teachers, staff, and students. Article 10 provides that the establishment of a non-public school shall meet the local education needs and satisfy the conditions prescribed by laws. The standards for the establishment of non-public schools shall conform to those of public schools.

Following this clarification, Article 50 stipulates that when a non-public school is constructed, the government shall provide the preferential treatment in accordance with the regulations on the use of land for the public good. Article 51 provides that after the cost of operating a non-public school is deducted, the investor may receive a reasonable return from the surplus. Specific measures for receiving such a return shall be specified by the State Council. Article 52 states that the government encourages building non-public schools for developing education in ethnic minority, outlying, and poor areas (Chinese National People's Congress, 2002).

The Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Collaborative Education article 3 stipulates that the government encourages Chinese institutions to collaborate with foreign institutions that have their quality universally recognized. The government encourages collaboration in emerging and highly needed disciplines, and in western, remote, or poor regions. Article 4 provides that Chinese and foreign collaborative institutions enjoy the support the government gives non-public institutions. Article 5 states that there shall be a Chinese agreement. If there is an agreement in a foreign language, its contents shall be the same as those in the Chinese agreement (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2004).

Article 21 states that members of the board of trustees in a collaborative institution shall abide by Chinese laws, love the education cause, and have good character. Article 28 specifies that these collaborative institutions are not allowed to engage in commercial activities for the purpose of making profit. Article 31 states that Chinese and foreign collaborators expecting a reasonable return shall abide by the Non-Public Education Promotion Act Implementation Regulation.

Article 46 states that when hiring employees, as a partner the Chinese institution shall, following the principle of having equal input from both sides, sign contracts with employees. Following this, Article 48 states that the requirements of a collaborative institution conferring foreign certificates or degrees shall not be lower than those in the home country of the foreign institute. Finally, Article 49 states that the certificates and degrees issued by a collaborative institution shall be the same as those issued in the home country of the foreign institute and shall be acknowledged there (Chinese Ministry of Education, 2004).

### **Discussion of Chinese Policy**

Education is fundamentally a moral endeavor (Furman, 2003), and it takes place in specific contexts where social regulation is justified by specific values (Norberg, 2003). Values, including expressions of ethical principles and commitments, can be thought of as conscious or unconscious influences on attitudes, actions, and speech (Begley, 2008). A careful reading of the Chinese Constitution, the Education Act, and the Higher Education Act indicates that the Chinese government promotes values of socialism, patriotism, collectivism, and equality; assistance to ethnic minority groups, poor people, and disabled people; continuation of Chinese traditions; and achievements of human civilization. The policies also indicate that there is a sense that China needs to be modernized, but in a socialist way. The Higher Education Act makes it clear that students must study government-specified political theories. The Act stresses that administrative affairs must be conducted in accordance with law. Institutions shall be administered in keeping with the interests of the country and the public. They shall be administered under the leadership of the

Communist Party. As a result, public institutions shall not be operated for the purpose of making profit. Non-public institutions' return from their investment shall be reasonable as specified by the state.

A reading of the Education Act and the Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Collaborative Education indicates that the Chinese government encourages international exchange and collaboration but insists that the principles of independence, equality, and mutual benefit shall be adhered to. Chinese laws shall not be violated, and the national sovereignty, security, and public interests shall not be harmed. Following this, the Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Collaborative Education specifies that Chinese institutions shall sign contracts with employees in collaborative institutions and programs.

After winning a civil war and gaining power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party claimed that only socialism could save China, a poor country with most of its people illiterate, and that socialism was superior to capitalism. But these dramatic claims were quietly dropped not long after China opened up economically and culturally to the world in 1978. More Chinese realized that people in developed capitalist countries enjoyed a higher standard of living and that Chinese in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau, three Chinese regions that have never had a socialist system, enjoyed a higher standard of living. The Chinese leadership understood that China had to catch up with developed countries by developing science and technology through education. This value of developing science and technology through education is clearly reflected in the Higher Education Act and other laws (see Yang & Frick, 2009). Some Chinese understand that globally China is not ranked high in the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI). To improve the quality of life, Chinese have to be better educated. The laws discussed in this paper reflect this understanding.

The development of Chinese higher education is uneven, with most institutions located in the relatively more developed eastern coastal regions (Zhou, 2007). People in eastern regions have an advantage accessing higher education over those in western regions. The national government is taking measures to make access to higher education more equitable across the country, and this value of promoting equality is reflected in several articles of the Higher Education Act and the Regulation on Chinese-Foreign Collaborative Education.

While the Chinese government claims that the economy in China is a market economy, which is acknowledged by most countries and international organizations, the Communist Party's intention of staying in power is clearly reflected in article 39 of the Higher Education Act. As in almost all other social units in China, the Communist Party secretary is a powerful and ubiquitous presence in higher education institutions (Feng, 2013). Values are concepts of the desirable (Hodgkinson, 1991), and these values are established and maintained through

normative communities whether in small groups or entire nation states (Strike, 2007). A value becomes a criterion for guiding one's own actions and thought, for influencing the actions and thought of others, and for morally judging oneself and others (Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins, 1994). Therefore, "values provide standards against which to evaluate things, people and ideas" (Horley, 2012, p. 163). With different values, political parties can be expected to favour different higher education systems and these parties matter for changes in policy (Jungblut, 2015). After China opened up in 1978, democratization reforms have been taken (as evidenced in some of the policy language reviewed above), but they are very slow and gradual. There are people with power who want to stay in power, and there is also a fear that too much freedom too fast may lead to anarchy, as the long history of China is full of civil wars. Incremental democratization is balanced against the magnitude of social complexity and chaotic interchange evidenced in, for example, the proportionately higher traffic accident rate and higher rate of food safety issues in China than those in developed countries.

The government claims that China's economy is a socialist market economy, but Rudd (2014) describes the Chinese system as a state capitalist model. It is not clear how much influence socialism still has, as reflected in the laws, and how much influence a market economy has. Progress to modify laws to make them suitable for a changing society is extremely slow. University autonomy is restricted and the state still retains effective control over key aspects of higher education governance (Li, 2014). The laws reviewed in this study reflect this state control. The Chinese model for social-political development denotes a central role of the state and places emphasis on efficiency for the sake of accelerating economic growth, which finds its expression in universities (Zha, Shi, & Wang, 2015). Higher education systems have always been in interaction with their locales and societal contexts, and the combinations of these interactions have produced different social dynamics for higher education systems. Higher education is—and has always been—a part of their societies (Valimaa & Nokkala, 2014). Although the Chinese are learning from developed countries in almost every aspect, the progress of the Chinese higher education system will be different from those in developed countries, because China has a different geography, history, and social, political, and cultural context with an attendant constellation of articulated values.

### **Ontario, Canada University Acts**

Canadian education is under the jurisdiction of provinces. The following paragraphs list sections found in the Ontario College Act and university acts related to values. There are 24 public colleges and 20 public universities in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2014), but there is no higher education act, although the Ontario Undergraduate

Student Alliance (2005) has recommended one. There is an Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2002). Its section 2 stipulates that the objects of the colleges are to offer a program of career-oriented education to assist individuals in finding and keeping employment, to meet the needs of employers and the changing work environment, and to support the economic and social development of their local and diverse communities. Other than that, the Act does not mention explicit values or ethical principles.

With respect to individual universities, the Canadian Senate passed An Act Respecting Queen's University in 1912. Its section 19 states that the University shall continue distinctively Christian, but laymen shall be eligible to any position in the University (Senate of Canada, 1912, 2011).

The Ontario legislature passed a bill respecting each of the other 19 universities. The Carlton University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1952) section 3 stipulates that the objects of the University are: 1) the advancement of learning; 2) the dissemination of knowledge; and 3) the intellectual, social, moral, and physical development of its members, and the betterment of its community. Eight other universities incorporated in the 1960s have a similar section in their acts. Four university acts mention spiritual development, one of which mentions accordance with Christian principles. One act mentions furthering bilingualism and biculturalism and preserving and developing French culture in Ontario. Carlton Act section 6 provides that attendance in any religious instruction or observances shall not be required at any time other than voluntary. Eleven other universities incorporated in the last century have a similar section in their acts. Carlton Act section 12 states that the property and income of the University shall be applied solely to achieving its objects. Thirteen other university acts have a similar section. Carlton Act section 15 says that the government and management of the University shall be vested in the Board of Governors, which shall have all powers necessary to perform its duties and achieve the objects of the University. Thirteen other acts have a similar section.

The Laurentian University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1960) section 5 stipulates that the management and control of the University be based upon Christian principles. The act of another university incorporated in 1965 has a similar section. The University of Toronto Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1971) section 2 states that no person shall serve as a member of the Governing Council of the University unless he is a Canadian citizen. Two other university acts have a similar section. Two university acts provide that only a Canadian citizen or permanent resident is eligible to be a member of their board of governors.

The University of Waterloo Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1972) section 3 specifies that the objects of the University are the pursuit of learning through scholarship, teaching, and research within a spirit of free enquiry and expression. Three other university acts have a similar section. The Waterloo Act section 27 says that the meetings of the Board of Governors and Senate shall be open to the public. Six other university acts have a similar section. The Waterloo Act section 28 states that the by-laws of the Board and Senate shall be open to examination by members of the University and public. Five other university acts have a similar section. The Waterloo Act section 33 stipulates that the Board shall make available to members of the University an annual report including a financial report. Four other university acts have a similar section.

Ryerson University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1977) section 3 indicates that the objects of the University are: ... (2) The advancement of applied knowledge and research in response to existing and emerging societal needs and in support of the cultural, economic, social, and technological development of Ontario. (3) The provision of programs of study provides a balance between theory and application and prepares students for careers in professional and quasi-professional fields.

The University of Western Ontario Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1982) section 17 stipulates that a member of the Board of Governors who has an interest in any contract under consideration by the Board shall (a) declare the interest, (b) refrain from taking part in any discussion or vote in relation to the matter, and (c) withdraw from the meeting when the matter is being discussed. Four other university acts have a similar section. Section 18 of the Act states that the Board may do such things it considers good for the University and consistent with the public interest. The Nipissing University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 1992) section 4 provides that its special mission is to be a teaching-oriented institution that offers programs in education, liberal arts, and science and programs that specifically address the needs of northern Ontario. Another university act also states a focus on northern needs.

Ontario College of Art & Design University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2002) section 6 indicates that the Board of Governors has the power to determine the mission, vision, and values of the University in a manner consistent with the objects of the University and that every member of the board shall exercise the powers and carry out the duties diligently, honestly, and in the best interests of the University. Two other university acts have a similar section. The University of Ontario Institute of Technology Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2002) section 3 stipulates that it is its special mission to provide career-oriented university programs and to offer programs with

a view to creating opportunities for college graduates to complete a university degree. Section 4 states that the objects of the University are (a) to provide programs with a primary focus on innovative programs responsive to student individual needs and to employers' market-driven needs and ... (c) to contribute to the advancement of Ontario with particular focus on the Durham region and Northumberland County. The Algoma University Act (Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2008) section 4 provides that it is its special mission to cultivate cross-cultural learning between aboriginal communities and other communities, in keeping with its geographic site.

### **Comparative Discussion**

A careful reading of the Chinese Higher Education Act and Ontario university acts indicates that the Chinese Act is more explicitly value-laden and more directly prescriptive. It seems that Chinese lawmakers who wrote the Higher Education Act felt that it was necessary to tell people what values they should follow. State control is stipulated in laws. Government departments of education in China have more power in regulating, evaluating, and supervising institutions. Another difference between the Chinese Higher Education Act and Ontario university acts is that most Ontario acts mention social development for students, but the Chinese Act does not, while both mention students' intellectual, moral, and physical development. Four Ontario university acts mention spiritual development, one of which indicates spiritual development in accordance with Christian principles. Ethics are normative social ideals usually grounded in cultural social experiences (Begley, 2008). Old Ontario universities have a Christian tradition, while the Chinese government promotes atheistic socialism. The Chinese Higher Education Act has a strong ideological influence, stating a clear socialist orientation, but Ontario university acts do not have any politically ideological statements. The Chinese Constitution and Higher Education Act promote collectivism, but this word is nowhere to be found in Ontario acts. With the context of historical Confucianism, China can be categorized as a collectivist society (Qian & Walker, 2014).

Both the Chinese Higher Education Act and Ontario university acts indicate that the development of higher education should meet the needs of economic and social development. Meeting local needs and special needs is stated in several Ontario acts, but not in the Chinese Higher Education Act, although the Chinese Act states that the government promotes developing higher education in ethnic minority, remote, and poor regions (likely an expression of primarily encouraging economic expansion). The diversity of uniquely formed institutions is reflected in Ontario acts, but not in the Chinese Act. An important and curious difference between the Chinese Act and Ontario acts is that recent Ontario acts indicate that they intend to increase the accountability of universities, likely indicative of a global ideology

characterised by effectiveness, efficiency, and quality. The language of "accountability" is nowhere to be found in the Chinese Act.

Branson (2006) put forward five contexts of worldviews: magical context, mythical context, agrarian context, modernity context, and post-modernity context. While it is difficult to accurately ascribe the Chinese context and the Ontario context to two of these five contexts, it is obvious that with different traditions, different political systems, and different social-cultural contexts in China and Ontario, different dynamics are at work. Higher education institutions are very diverse and operate within national contexts that are highly different (Bleiklie, 2014). In higher education, the differences in policy content can be traced to differences in national political organization (Bleiklie & Michelsen, 2013). With Jungblut's (2015) analytical dimension focusing on the control over the higher education sector, the Chinese system can be described as having centralised control, where the state and its bureaucracy are the main actors steering the system, but the Ontario system can be described as having decentralised control, where institutions are supervised at arms-length and enjoy high levels of autonomy. The values and ethical principles identified within relevant policy texts reflect this fact.

### **Conclusion**

After a close examination of the Chinese Higher Education Act and other related laws, the values of socialism, collectivism, patriotism, equality, continuation of traditions, assistance to disadvantaged groups, and conducting affairs ethically in accordance with law are all reflected as value statements in legislation. A reading between the Chinese Higher Education Act and Ontario university acts shows that Chinese higher education policy is more value-laden and more prescriptive, which is a clear indication that the centralized Chinese government has more power than the provincial Ontario government in deciding how higher education should be provided, developed, and operated and what values faculty and students should follow; although both governments provide significant funding to institutions. The Chinese Higher Education Act has a clear ideological influence, which Ontario university acts do not have, although a few of them have their Christian tradition stated as a historical value priority.

Chinese higher education has made significant progress since China opened up to the world in 1978. Students from the largest Chinese cities outperform counterparts in mathematics and science in a 60 country Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development assessment, and China is fast becoming one of the most popular international destinations for overseas study. With this said, the higher education system as a whole still does poorly on quality indicators (Postiglione, 2015), and there is a long way for China to become an internationally influential part of the higher education

landscape (Huang, 2015). To sustain the development of Chinese higher education and advance it to the level of that in North America, Western Europe, and Japan, more efforts are needed from both the Chinese government and Chinese citizens themselves. Vision and boldness is required (Yang, 2014). It will be useful for China and its citizens to consider the values expressed in the Higher Education Act and other related laws. While the Chinese need to reflect upon the values and ethical principles expressed in their laws that govern higher education, it is also useful for the world to be aware of and understand what values drive laws that govern higher education in China, the most populous country in the world with the most extensive higher education system and the largest national economy as measured in purchasing power parity. Policy and its making is not simply technical problem-solving, but rather calls for reflexive awareness of presuppositions of value, culture, habit, and knowledge implicit in the activity of policy itself (Scheffler, 1984).

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