

# China Project Since 1997

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# Snapshot on China

## Through a Chinese-Canadian Lens

Population: 1.3 Billion and growing, one fifth of the world

- Numerous ethnic minority groups
- Significant rural population

Politics: Centralized rule under the Communist Party

- Slow movement towards democracy, fueled by the increasing demand for rights and voice by a growing affluent/middle class
- Extreme inequity creates tension and potential conflict
- Central Government called for building of a “harmonious society”
- Local governance and direct election now happening at the grassroots level

# Snapshot on China

## Through a Chinese-Canadian Lens

Economy: Market economy replacing centrally planned economy

- Rapid growth since the late 70s, average 9+% per annum
- The world's second largest economy. GDP in 2010: \$1.33 trillion
- Foreign reserve: (billion dollars)

• 1977	2.3	
• 1980	2.5	
• 1990	29.6	
• 2000	165.6	
• June 2010	2,454.3	Canada : 41.1 (2008)
- Mainly in major coastal cities, most of Western China still underdeveloped  
Extreme uneven distribution of wealth, life-chances, and access to services and resources

# Per Capita GDP

	2010	2015
Canada	39,033	44,675
China	7,518	12,449
Japan	33,828	40,195
USA	47,132	55,409

## Uneven progress

The percentage of the population in China living below the poverty line fell more in some periods than others during 1981-2001.

(percent below poverty line)

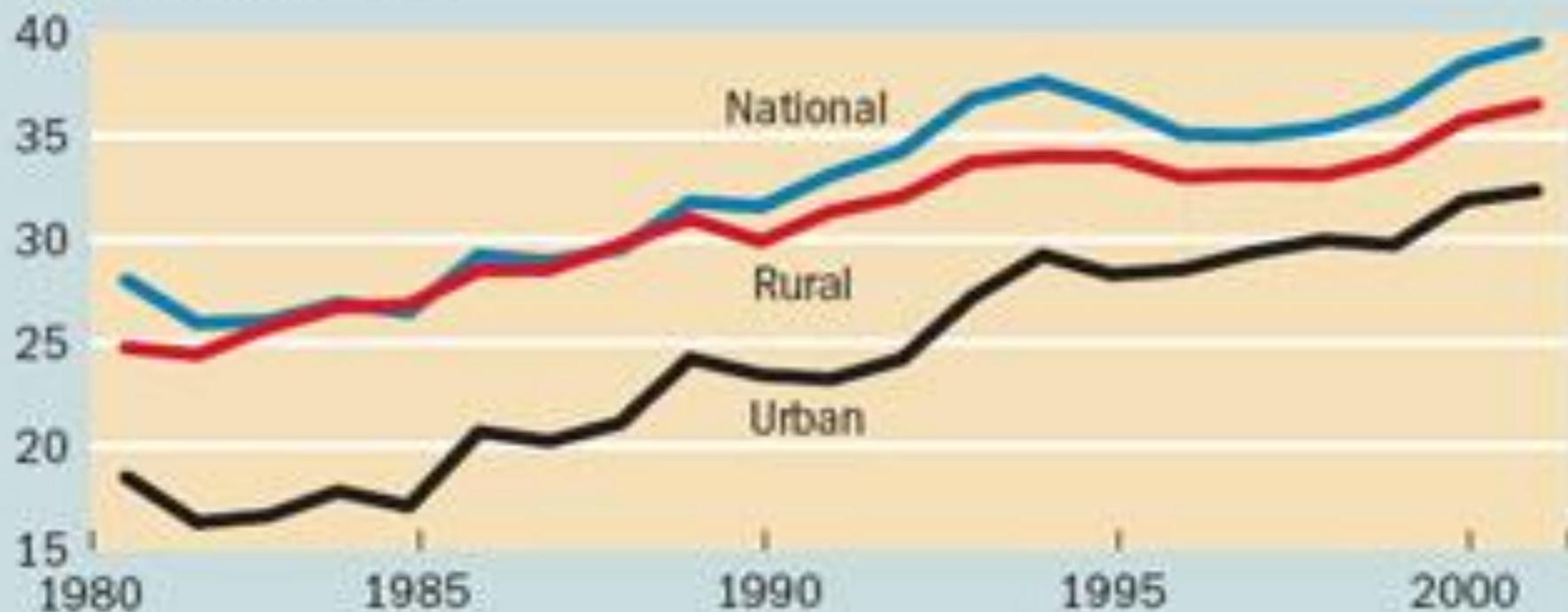


Source: Ravallion and Chen, 2004.

## Rising inequality

The gap between rich and poor has risen in China, although more in urban areas than rural areas.

(Gini index<sup>1</sup>; percent)



Source: Ravallion and Chen, 2004.

<sup>1</sup>The Gini Index is a measure of income inequality within a population.

# Snapshot on China

## Through a Chinese-Canadian Lens

### Culture:

- Dominated by traditional patriarchy, but exciting dissent and trespass
- Nationalism: State -centered
- Internal diversity: Multiple articulations, heteroglossia
- Undergoing multiple transformations: Globalization and international influence
- IT: Internet, mobile phones, text messages
- Beyond Christianity and Islam: Relative freedom from religious binding, but vulnerable to fundamentalist thinking

# Snapshot on China

## Through a Chinese-Canadian Lens

- Moving from South to North
  - Centre of global action: Playing the role of superpower
  - Perceived as threat
- Wealthy state and poor citizens?
  - Between 1981 and 2001, the proportion of population living in poverty in China fell from 53 percent to just eight percent (90 million)
  - A growing affluent class
  - High concentration of capital in an elite class
- Internal transformation: Civil society amidst mounting tension
- Discursive frames: Shift, contestation, conflict

# Market Economy within a Socialist Political Order

## Development and Contradictions

- State owned enterprises (SOE) used to provide comprehensive services (e.g. housing, medical, childcare) for their employees
- As SOEs give way to private business, social service functions are displaced into the “community”
- Shifts in social organization, political arrangement, identity, and citizenship
- Emergence of issues and challenges: Unemployment, huge migrant populations, poverty, crime, public health concerns, etc.

# Professional Social Work as an Emerging Reality

Major social service providers:

- Government ministries (e.g., Civil Affairs, Labor, Health)
- Government-directed public organizations (e.g., All China Women's Federation, Communist Youth League)
- NGO is an emerging sector

“Social Work” in China

- Depending on definition, over a million practitioners are carrying out functions that would be regarded as social work or social service in the West

Professional and Academic Social Work

- Over 200 programs and growing (only 20+ in 1997)
- Strong influence from Hong Kong (former British colony)

# Historical Notes

1987

I participated in the Social Work Education Program in Guangzhou, China started by Richard Nann (UBC, then University of Hong Kong) and taught courses in Social Work at the B.A. level

1997

Attended the National Conference of the Chinese Association of Social Work Education (September 26 – October 6) upon invitation by the China College of Civil Affairs (CCCA), training arm of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Started exploration of prospective collaboration with social work educators.

# Historical Notes

1998

Dean Wes Shera visited Beijing and Hong Kong in September. Met with President Wang Laizhu of CCCA, and developed mutual understanding regarding the general direction of the Collaborative Project.

1999

Chinese delegation representing the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Peking University visited Toronto in February.

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by Dean Wes Shera and President Wang Laizhu (China College of civil Affairs), formally launching the Collaborative Project

# Phase I: 1999-2004

## **Major Programs**

International Colloquium on Social Work Education 2000 – A snapshot of current thinking and emerging ideas

Delphi Study – Indigenous views on social work education

Training of Social Work Educators – Creation of a critical mass

Textbook and Course Material – Developing resources for social work education

Visiting scholars program

# 2005 Onwards: Phase II

## Social Work Practice Education

- Weak spot: Most professors not trained in social work, coming from various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities
- Theoretical education not supported by direct practice experience
- Lack of competent practice teachers and field educators
- Lack of role models
- Our focus: Training of practitioners and practice teachers
- Major partners:
  - Beijing Institute of Technology (clinical practice)
  - Shandong University (community work)

# 2005 Onwards: Phase II

## NGO Development

- Building the NGO sector, especially in Shandong province
  - Founded the Shanquan Community Service Centre
  - Multiple service sites – community centre, seniors facilities, mental hospitals, funeral home, school
  - Demonstration projects in 2008 leading to government purchase of service (30 positions in 2010)
- Specific community service initiatives (e.g., school social work, child protection, family violence, labor rights, medical social work, etc.)
- Supporting ongoing NGO work, e.g., Handa Association (working with people with epilepsy), Limin Community Health Centre, Jiangmen

# 2005 Onwards: Phase II

## Disaster relief and training and development

- Sichuan Earthquake May 12, 2008
- Psychotherapy training for psychiatrists, psychotherapists
- Community redevelopment
- Nourishing NGO and grassroots projects

## Policy

- Ministry of Civil Affairs: Legislations regarding income protection, regulation of charity organizations
- State Commission of Population and Family Planning
- Healthcare reform : collaboration with Institute of International Health, UofT

# Partners in China

## Shandong Univeristy

- Development of social work curriculum
- Training of social work faculty members
- NGO development and specific community service initiatives (e.g., school social work, child protection, family violence, labor rights, medical social work, etc.)

## Ministry of Civil Affairs

- Legislations regarding income protection, regulation of charity organizations

# Partners in China

## Beijing Institute of Technology

- Psychotherapy training

## Tsinghua University (Medical School)

- Joint project with Faculty of Social Work to help develop training programs for healthcare professionals
- Residency program to train psychiatrists in China
- Specific research projects (e.g., traditional Chinese medicine, single parents, suicide, internet addiction)

# Knowledge Production and Transfer

- Direct training of social work faculty members and students, including visiting scholarship program
- First international conference 2000, Beijing, proceedings in English and Chinese
- Academic publications: refereed journals
- Textbooks (e.g., Neysmith , Liu, & Chen: Women and Social Work; Irving: Family Mediation; Bogo: Field Education)
- Special publications:
  - Glimmering Everywhere: 28 Stories of Chinese Social Workers
  - Collection of papers translated from international journals into Chinese
- The China Project Website (bilingual):  
<http://www.chinaprojectsite.com/>

# Here in Canada

## Service to the local Chinese communities in Canada

- Research and development for settlement service agencies
- Consultation and training to agencies serving Chinese communities
- Research on social service issues related to the Chinese community
- The Chinese Community Service Workers Networking Group

## Visiting Scholars Program

- Many of our visiting scholars have returned to strategic positions of influence upon completion of their program (e.g., Director General of Central office and Legislation Bureau of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Head of the Department of Social Work, China College of Civil Affairs, Child Protection Policy Unit, Nanking Normal University School of Social Work, Professor Gao Jinguo, Head of Social Work Department, Shandong University)

# Crystal Ball Gazing:

## Imagining Social Work in the New World Order

- Unsettling the frames: Disrupting categorical imagination
- Rising prominence of China: The New World Order (Global Capitalism) – Reshaping alliances and conflicts
- China in the new neo-colonial role
- De-centering Western/Northern social work
- Critical geography: Universalism and complication of space
- Social work, the state, and the people
- Knowledge and praxis:
  - Type I and type II knowledge
  - The marginalization of academia, and the university model

# Contact

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