

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE CENTRALIZED SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHINA

by

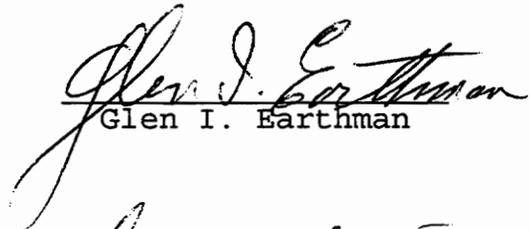
Jielu Zhao

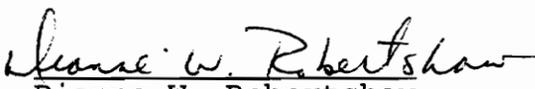
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(Abstract)

This study has two purposes: (1) to document and analyze the centralization phenomena in China's higher education system and (2) to make suggestions to improve or modify the centralization of China's higher education system in light of the documentation and analysis. A major outcome of this study is an analysis of telephone interviews and secondary documents, and four recommendations are derived from this analysis.

In this study four research questions have been investigated: (1) What relationship exists between the government and individual colleges or universities? What should this relationship be? (2) What kind of relationship exists between the Party committee and the university administration, especially the relationship between the university president and Party committee? What should this relationship be? (3) How much autonomy should the colleges and universities possess? (4) How should higher education institutions move from the centralization planning economy and adapt themselves to the market economy?

Two methods have been employed in this study: secondary document analysis and telephone interviewing. The secondary analysis consists of information collection in both Chinese and American libraries, information evaluation, categorization, and analysis. The telephone interviewing has been used to strengthen secondary analysis. The interviews were conducted with 15 Chinese scholars who were studying in the U.S. at the time and who have either worked in China's higher education system for more than ten years or have assumed some administrative responsibilities above the department level in that system.

The major findings of the telephone interviews and secondary analysis lead to the conclusion that the higher education system in present China is highly centralized and, according to the consensus viewpoint, should be decentralized in light of the four recommendations made in this study.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father and to the memory of my mother, who gave me the foresight and determination to fulfill my doctoral study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the oldest continuous major world civilization and a country with the greatest potentiality in natural resources and human power, China's importance in and influence upon today's world politics and economy have been well recognized. Although there is still a distance in social and economic development between China and the advanced countries in the world, "China cannot stay where it is for very long. The great giant has been unleashed" (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1991, p.204). China's rise to join the advanced countries in the world is underway.

Chinese people tend to be proud of their country, not merely because of its large population and huge geographic size nor simply because of its rapid economic growth in recent years, but because of its long history of civilization and its cultural heritage. About this, Meyer wrote:

China, moreover, enjoys the oldest, most continuously recorded civilization in the world; ... the Chinese, long before the Christian era in the Western world, had initiated the philosophic bases for the political state that endured several millennia. They learned through doctrine and practice how to accommodate themselves to each other in society and how to achieve a pattern of harmony between man and his natural environment. Proud of their accomplishments and ethnocentric in their outlook, they coursed their own unique way. Through conquest or cultural example, they involved peripheral states in their mode of life. Japan, Korea, Central Asia, ... and northern Vietnam came into the Chinese sphere of influence. The term East Asia, in this broad cultural context, embraces all these political units,

for it designates the far-ranging geographic area that has been inspired largely by Chinese civilization [1978, p.2]

In the process of fashioning such a powerful civilization, education has always played an important role. However, in order to better understand China's educational development, it is important, first of all, to have an overview of the general conditions in China.

Background Notes on China

Anyone who is going to have a through understanding of any particular part of China's society should first have some basic background information about the country itself. This is a study of China's higher education system. The world of higher education usually has an active relationship with different parts of the society. The development of higher education has been and will continue to be affected by factors both beyond and within its immediate environment. Therefore, it is important to begin this study with some background information about the social, political, and economic background of the People's Republic of China. Only thus can China's higher education system be appropriately understood.

Geography

The People's Republic of China, situated in eastern Asia, on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean, is the world's third largest country in terms of area. It has a territory of 9.6 million square kilometers, next only to the former Soviet Union and Canada (USDOS [United States Department of States], 1983; Qin, 1993). China's surface slopes down from west to east in a four-step staircase, the top of which is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, known as "the roof of the world". The major mountain ranges are the Kunlun, Gangdise and Himalaya. The Yangtze River (6,300 km) and the Yellow River (5,464 km) are the major rivers in China, flowing from west to east. China has 96 million hectares of cultivated land, 129 million hectares of forest coverage, and 400 million hectares of grasslands.

Population

The 1992 statistics of the State Statistics Bureau indicate China has a population of 1.17 billion [excluding Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao] (Qin, 1993). As the most populous country in the world, China, as its Vice Premier Tian pointed out, "is faced with the basic national realities of a vast population, scarce farmland, and few per capita natural resources. Therefore population poses a serious problem to China's social and economic development"

(Greer, 1990, p.102). Family planning has become one of the basic national policies for China to strictly control excessive population growth. The major requirements of family planning are late marriage, late childbirth, and one child per couple.

Ethnic groups

China is a multi-national country with 56 identifiable ethnic groups. The largest nationality is the Han Chinese who constitute 92 percent of the country's total population. The other 55 minorities include Zhuang, Hui, Uygur, Yi, Miao, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, and so on (Qin, 1993). Although standardized Chinese is used as the official language among all these ethnic groups, the dialect of each ethnic group is still favored by the local people.

Administrative subdivisions

China has 23 provinces, 5 autonomous regions, 3 special municipalities, 174 prefectures, and about 2,200 counties (Summerfield, 1991; Qin, 1993).

History

According to archaeological findings, the earliest existence of human beings in China may be dated back to 500,000 - 1,000,000 years ago. In the 21st century B.C. the

Xia Dynasty was established as the first slave society in Chinese history. The establishment of the Qin Dynasty in 221 B.C. marked the ending of the slave society and the beginning of a feudal society. In the Qin Dynasty, China, for the first time in its history, became a centralized, unified, multi-national state. In the Qin Dynasty, a road system was developed; a common written language that bridged the gap between the country's many local languages and dialects was practiced in all parts of the country; coinage, weights, and measures were all standardized; and the Great Wall was repaired and the large gaps in it joined together.

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. Thereafter, the 2000 years of feudal rule was abandoned and a new socialist country was established.

Structure of the State

The National People's Congress (NPC) is the highest organ of state power and exercises the power of legislation. As the highest executive organ of the country, the State Council implements the laws and resolutions adopted by the NPC. The People's Courts are judicial organs of the state. The President of the People's Republic of China, in implementing of decisions of the NPC, has the authority to appoint and remove members of the State Council and to issue orders. The current president of the PRC is Jiang Zemin,

who is also Chairman of the Central Military Commission, China's leading military organ commanding the armed forces of the country.

Political Parties

The major party that plays a leading role in the country is the Communist Party of China (CPC). Presently it has more than 52 million members and its General Secretary is Jiang Zemin. Besides the Communist Party, there are eight other democratic parties.

Economy

Since 1949, China has practiced a centrally planned economic system in which the state controls almost all the economic activities. However, in recent years, with the deepening of the economic reforms, more and more family-run farms and private enterprises and businesses have come into existence and have played important roles in the national economic development. The 14th National Congress of the CPC, held in 1992, clearly stated the goal of China's economic reforms -- establishing a socialist market economic system.

According to the State Bureau of Statistics, "China's 1992 General National Product (GNP) was 2,393.8 billion yuan, a 12.8 percent increase over 1991 in constant prices;

per capita GNP reached 2,055 yuan, 330 yuan more than in 1991 in constant prices ..." (Qin, 1993, p.61).

China's industrial output value of 1992 grew to 1,011.6 billion yuan, 20.8 percent higher than that of 1991 in constant prices.

China's retail sales in 1992 "totalled 1,099.4 billion yuan, an actual increase of 10.8 percent over 1991 after adjusting for price factors" (Qin, 1993, pp.61-62).

Transportation

The chief means of transportation over long distances in China are trains, buses, and ships. Airplanes have become more popular in recent years, but to the majority of the Chinese people they are still expensive. Qin Shi provided some statistics in his book, China (1993),

By 1992 the total length of rail lines ... reached 53,900 kilometers, including electrified lines of 8,742 kilometers. ... By 1992 China had 1.054 million kilometers of highways opened to traffic, of which there were 590 kilometers of expressways and 5,490 kilometers of first and second grade highways. ... Navigable inland waterways in China totalled 110,000 kilometers in 1992 (pp.74-75).

Education

According to 1992 statistics of the State Education Commission (SEDC), China now has 729,158 primary schools, 85,851 secondary schools and 1075 higher education institutions (SEDC, 1992).

The primary schools usually provide a six-year curricular program, including moral character, Chinese, mathematics, nature, history, geography, drawing, music and physical education.

The secondary schools are usually composed of junior and senior high schools, each with a three year length of study. The courses offered in the secondary schools include Chinese, mathematics, foreign languages, politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, physical education, music, fine arts, psychology and work skills.

Currently there are 1,075 higher education institutions in China which may be divided into three categories and eight subject divisions with 823 specialties. The three categories are (1) universities and four-year colleges, (2) advanced schools for specialized training, and (3) advanced vocational schools. The eight subject divisions include the humanities, political science and law, finance and economics, education, science, engineering, agriculture and forestry, and medicine (SEDC, 1988). The following table classifies China's higher education institutions.

<u>Institution Type</u>	<u>Institution Number</u>
Comprehensive Univ.	37
Polytechnic Institutions	275
Agriculture Univ. & Coll.	60
Forestry Univ. & Coll.	11
Medical Univ. & Coll.	119
Teacher's Univ. & Coll.	260
Language Univ. & Coll.	14
Finance & Economics Univ & Coll.	74
Political Science & Law Univ & Coll.	25
Physical Education Univ. & Coll.	16
Arts Univ. & Coll.	30
Ethnic Minority Univ. & Coll.	11
Advanced Vocational Schools	122
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,063</u>

(SEDC, 1988)

The above paragraphs reflect a very brief social, political, and economic context of China. It is in this context that this study is undertaken.

The following sections focus on the discussion of China's higher education development.

A Historical Retrospective

Since ancient times to the middle of this century, China had been administered by the educated elite and education had been a major concern of the Chinese. It has long been believed that a better education would provide a man with better opportunities for entering upper society. For almost two thousand years prior to its abolition in 1905, a system of civil service examinations was used by the government as the principal way of selecting officials for public

office (Biggerstaff, 1972; Li & Tan, 1990). In those days public office yielded the greatest prestige and power, as well as the means of acquiring wealth. Hence, the acquisition of a good education became the object of many ambitious young people, as well as a topic of discourse for many philosophers and educators.

The greatest ancient Chinese educator and philosopher, Confucius, advocated the importance of education and book-learning by saying: "All is inferiority except those who acquire book-learning;" and "One who studies with brilliant achievements ought to be appointed official duties, and when the official performs his duties well he shall make advanced studies."

Another great Chinese philosopher and educator, Mencius, also made some similar statements. He said: "A brain-worker can govern the public, whereas a man engaged in unskilled labor is sure to be governed by the public" (Zhang, 1990, p.356). For almost two thousand years these ideas have been handed down from generation to generation, and their impact on Chinese thinking about education is strong and enduring. For generations Chinese who could afford to do so would try their hardest to receive a good education and would study diligently to prepare for the imperial examinations.

However, education in old China was provided mostly by private schools. These schools were taught by old scholars or retired officials and supported by the tuition fees from the students. For many centuries the Four Books (Analects of Confucius, Mencius, Great Learning, and Doctrine of the Mean) and the Five Classics (the Book of Changes, the Book of History, the Book of Songs, the Book of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Annals) were used as the major teaching materials. The chief purpose of these schools was to help students acquire a thorough knowledge of the classics and of the orthodox interpretation of them and skills in the use of accepted forms of literary expression. No practical knowledge was taught or considered important in those schools. Also these schools usually did not have regular classes as is true today. Tutoring and examinations were the chief teaching activities. This kind of traditional education served Chinese society for more than two thousand years and was abolished in 1905 because of Western influences and the Xinhai revolution (a democratic revolution led by Sun Zhongshan).

Traditional Higher Education

Higher education's roots in China can be found more than two thousand years ago in the early period of the Han dynasty. As early as 124 B.C., the first ancient institu-

tion of higher learning was founded in the form of "Taixue" (imperial college of great learning). This institution was financially supported and administratively controlled by the central government. The purposes of founding such an institution were to set up an educational example for the whole country to follow, to promote education and culture, and to unify people's moral standard. Because the emperor himself especially favored the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, what was taught in the imperial college was chiefly the works of the scholars of the Confucian school. Although the institution was run on a very small scale and only 50 students were enrolled at first, its development was so fast that in the year 146 the school had as many as 240 buildings, including 1850 rooms, and the enrollment had reached approximately 30,000 students. From that time until the end of the Qing Dynasty (1911), each dynasty had its own imperial colleges of higher learning, but the enrollment of those later institutions never surpassed that of the Han Dynasty (Li & Tan, 1990).

Another kind of higher education institution in ancient China was Shuyuan (academy of classical learning). Shuyuan as a place for reading and lecturing first came into existence in the late Tang Dynasty (900) and flourished more than 1000 years until the end of the Qing Dynasty.

Shuyuan's prime period was the Song Dynasty during which 173 official and private Shuyuan were established. As a special place for both research and teaching, Shuyuan played an important role in promoting education in ancient China.

Modern Higher Education

China's modern higher education system can be dated from about the end of the nineteenth century, and it was formed in the process of learning from the West. Like the English and the Germans, the Chinese have been considered highly conservative, and their educational system has also been conservative in nature. Until the end of the last century, the Chinese had always met their educational needs through their own initiatives. Viewing foreigners as cultural and educational barbarians, there seemed to be no reason to call on outsiders to advise the education of the Chinese populace. Only when China was first defeated by the West in the Opium War (1839-1842) and was forced to open parts of the country to Western people and their ideas, did the Chinese government begin to realize the gap in science and technology between China and the advanced Western countries. Then the need for learning from the West and of building China into a strong nation was given first priority.

In 1862, Emperor Tong Zhi of the Qing Dynasty approved of the establishment of a language school for the training of official interpreters. In 1866 it was raised to the rank of a college. This school was China's first higher education institution in the modern sense. Its first president, Dr. W.A.P. Martin, was invited from the U.S.A., and the courses including English, French, and Japanese were taught by the teachers invited from those countries (Kuo, 1915; Li & Tan, 1990). As the years passed, and as occasion demanded, colleges of agriculture, mechanics, mining, and military science were founded one after another at the turn of the last century.

The period from 1895 through 1911 was important in China's higher education history, for this period saw the birth of many high-level, modern universities on Chinese soil. Among these early universities the most influential ones were Beiyang University (1895) , Jiao Tong University (1896), Zhejiang University (1897), Beijing University (1898), Beijing Normal University (1902), Southeastern University (1902), Fudan University (1905), Sichuan University (1905), Tongji University (1907), and Qinghua University (1911) (SEDC [State Education Commission], 1991).

Many of the modern universities in China came into existence through Western cooperation. For instance, Qinghua University, Yanjing University, and sixteen other

missionary colleges were established through American cooperation. Tongji University was founded as a result of German government support, whereas the University Franco-chinoise was administered by a joint committee of French and Chinese public figures who provided financial support.

Some other modern universities were transformed or upgraded from the traditional imperial colleges or Shuyuan. For example, the predecessor of Beijing University was styled Jing Shi Da Xue Tang (the Imperial School of Higher Learning), that of Sichuan University was Jinjiang Shuyuan (Jinjiang Academy of Classical Learning), and that of Zhejiang University was called Qiu Shi Shuyuan (Qiu Shi Academy of Classical Learning).

The most important feature of the universities of modern China was that almost all those universities showed clear exemplars of both the American and the European modes of knowledge and organization. The universities established through Western cooperation naturally expressed a variety of Western-inspired curriculum and administrative patterns. However, even those reorganized traditional higher education institutions had great interest in learning from the West. For example, the first comprehensive university of modern China, Beiyang University, was originally named Beiyang School of Western Learning. A careful scrutiny of this name may well reveal the great impact of Western influence on the

national psychology of the Chinese. Moreover, most of the universities founded before 1949 were headed and staffed by Chinese scholars recently returned from America and Europe, and naturally these universities were appreciably influenced by their Western ideas. As a result, the curricula and administrative structure of these universities had similarities to those of the Western countries.

Another important feature of China's early modern universities was that they showed a real academic diversity. Different universities supported or influenced by different Western countries showed different curricular emphases and administrative systems. Qinghua University and other American-influenced universities expressed the practicability and flexibility of the American higher education patterns, whereas Beijing University, another center of leading scholarship, was heavily influenced by the German model of the university curriculum which was limited to pure theoretical disciplines in the arts and sciences.

Of all the Western countries that have significantly influenced China's higher education development, the United States of America ranks first. In many of the universities in the first half of this century, America's credit system was used, and a wide range of curricula was provided. Many universities emphasized applied knowledge areas and cross-disciplinary fields in response to the needs of economic and

social development. Moreover, an American style of institutional organization, with colleges between the university and department levels, was introduced in many of the large universities (Hayhoe, 1989).

There were chiefly two reasons to explain why American patterns were well received by Chinese scholars. First, many of the scholars who returned from the U.S. took up leading positions, and they exerted a great influence on the governance of individual colleges or universities. Secondly, in the political anarchy of the early part of this century, there was a lack of a central force to develop a centralized educational policy allowing educators to create institutions that would contribute to economic and social development. The diversity, practicability, and flexibility of the American higher education system appeared most conducive to the ends of the Chinese intellectuals.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, the ten successive years of war among warlords, eight years of the anti-Japanese war, and four years of civil war prevented any significant development in China's higher education system. That was why, when the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, there were only 205 higher education institutions and 117,000 undergraduates in the whole country (SEDC, 1988).

Higher Education in the People's Republic of China

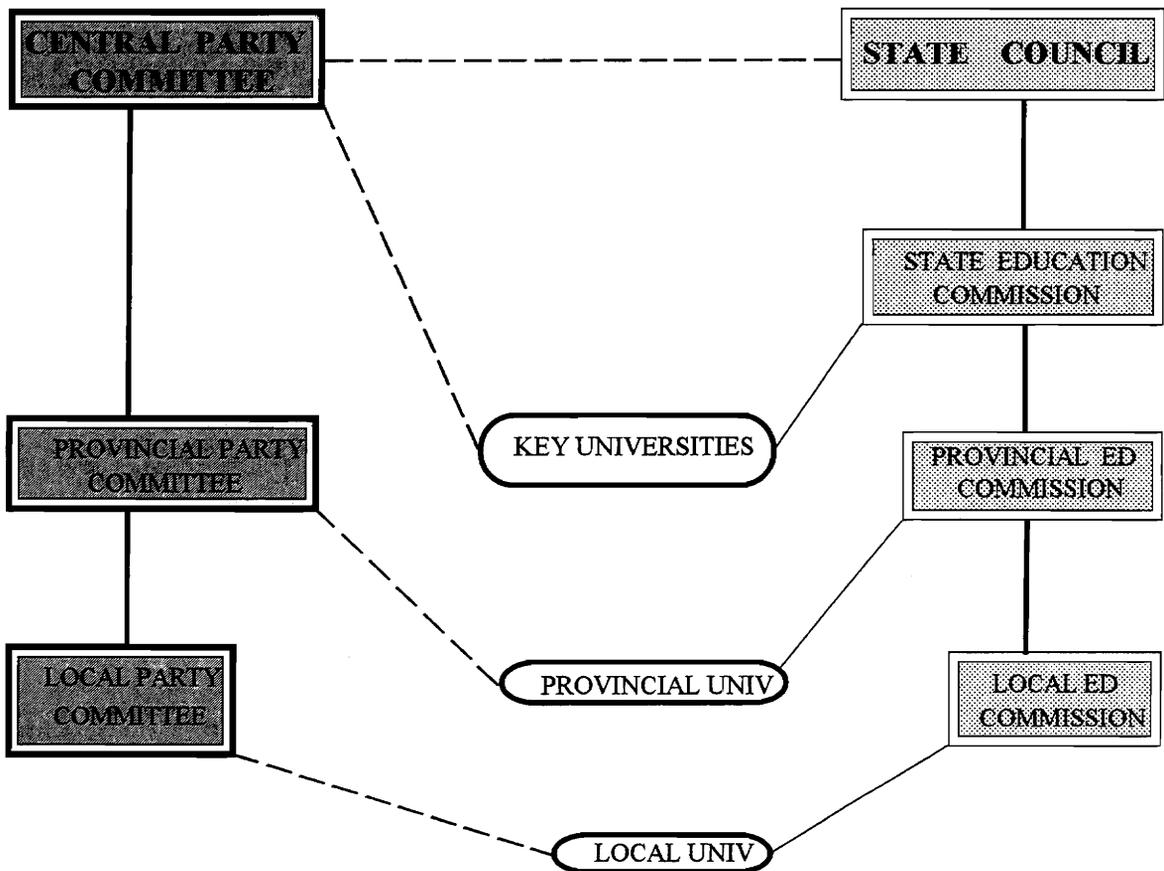
The founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 started a new historic era for the country. The new government attached great importance to the development of education, because the educational philosophy in New China is "education must serve socialist construction and socialist construction must rely on education development" (SEDC, 1988, p.72). Soon after the founding of the People's Republic, the new government immediately engaged in a complete higher education reform in 1952. All the private universities were transformed into public ones, and most of the universities and departments were rearranged or reorganized. The former diversified, Western-inspired higher education pattern was transformed into a centralized, Soviet model (e.g. emphasis on science and technology, early and narrow specialization, and establishing Party committees in all higher education institutions to secure leadership of the Communist Party over educational matters). The whole higher education system became a very centralized one, headed by the Ministry of Education (which was changed to the State Education Commission in 1986) and supervised by the central government (Reed, 1988; Pepper, 1990).

The higher education institutions in the People's Republic of China today may be divided into three broad categories: key universities under the State Education

Commission; provincial universities under the provincial governments; and local universities under the local governments. However, all these higher education institutions are in fact administratively and financially controlled by the policies and guidelines of the central government. Moreover, at each level of the government there is a parallel Party organization monitoring and supervising the government's work. (See the sketch of China's higher education administration system on the following page.) In the early days of the People's Republic this kind of centralized administrative structure did play an important role in developing the nation's higher education system. Therefore, by 1966 the number of China's higher education institutions had grown to 434 and the number of students in the institutions had increased to 534,000 (SEDC, 1988).

The ten-year Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) caused severe damage to higher education in China. During most of the period of this decade of internal unrest, most of the colleges and universities were closed, and high school graduates were forced to go to the countryside to receive so called "reeducation" from the peasants. However, immediately after the Cultural Revolution China's higher education development was restarted and accelerated.

From 1977 to the present, higher education in China has experienced a period of unprecedented growth. According to



Legend

1. The solid lines represent a direct leadership.
2. The dotted lines represent an indirect leadership.
3. Different shading refers to different systems.

Notes

1. This chart of China's higher education administration system is only a very brief sketch of that system.
2. This chart is based upon the results of the literature review and is attempted to reflect an official, formal view of China's higher education structure.

Figure 1. The Administrative Structure of China's Higher Education System

State Education Commission statistics for 1991, China now has 1075 regular institutions of higher education (institutions for recent high school graduates) and 1256 adult institutions of higher education (institutions for local adults pursuing further studies or professional training). The total number of students in regular higher education institutions in 1991 was 2,131,800 and the total number of students of adult higher education institutions was 1,473,100 (SEDC, 1992). Compared with the educational situation before 1949, these numbers appear to be significant, but if the population of China and the higher education statistics in some of the advanced countries are considered, the numbers are less impressive.

How could China's higher education develop faster and better? Can the centralized higher education system still meet the needs of the social and economic development in the 1990s?

These are the questions that have been lingering in the minds of many educators and educational administrators.

Statement of the Problem

Since 1949 China's higher education has been administered as a highly centralized system. In all higher education institutions, the teaching, research, and educational administration all have been under the control of the

policies and guidelines produced by the central government. Things like academic standards, course content, and research agendas all have been planned or regulated by the unified national educational guidelines (Wang, 1985; Delany & Paine, 1991). For instance, "the unified curricula specify which courses, both compulsory and elective, must be taught for each major; the sequence in which they are to be taught, and the number of hours per course. Syllabi further prescribe the content of each course" (Pepper, 1993, p. 136).

At the same time, the funding of higher education has been just a matter of state appropriation, with appropriations from the central government and the local government the only sources of income. Moreover, all the expenditures in an individual college or university are carried out in accordance with the budget control regulations formulated by the central government. In addition, the level of higher education enrollment and the job assignments for the graduates each year are decided by the State Education Commission through consultation with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Labor, and the State Planning Commission, and the entrance examinations are unified by the central educational organization (SEDC, 1988; Reed, 1988; Yang, 1993).

This kind of higher education system has remained for more than 40 years without any significant change. As the Report of the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation correctly pointed out in 1992:

The higher education system in the People's Republic of China is centralized. All tertiary institutions are ultimately responsible to the State Education Commission which is responsible for policies relating to the whole education system. . . . Tertiary institutions receive the bulk of their funds from the central or local authority whose jurisdiction they are under" (HKCFAA [the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation], 1992, p.4).

The present guiding philosophy in China's education is Deng Xiaoping's instruction: "Education must be geared to the needs of modernization, the world, and the future (Li, 1986-87, p.27). However, the capability of the present centralized system to attain this end is questionable.

A centralized system may not be entirely a disadvantage. The issue is when, where, and how much centralization should be practiced. For example, in the first two decades of the People's Republic, the intellectual and financial resources were very tight, the number and size of the higher education institutions were small, and the needs of the social and economic development were not so complex and diversified. The centralized leadership showed its advantages in China's higher education development, especially in planning for the educational needs of the society as a whole, in unifying the academic standards, and in balancing

the educational development in different regions. As Brook argued, the centralized system "is criticized for rigidity but upheld for its efficiency, for providing the goals that society demands" (Brook, 1984, 175).

Today, China's society is completely different from that of 40 years ago and its economy is in a period of dramatic development. China's social and economic development demands a more rapid growth of higher education in the number, size, and diversity of its institutions. Can the present highly centralized system assume this role? There are reasons to conclude that it can not.

First, the nature of higher education demands autonomy and decentralization. While discussing the tradition in postsecondary education, Kaplin pointed out:

... higher education was often viewed as a unique enterprise that could regulate itself ... and it operated best by operating autonomously, and it thrived on the privacy afforded by autonomy. Academia, in short, was like a Victorian gentlemen's club whose sacred precincts were not to be profaned by the involvement of outside agents in its internal governance" (1985, p.3).

Secondly, autonomy within the organization becomes a live issue as a result of organizational growth. When the organization begins to break down into identifiable units, then centralization becomes an issue (Brook, 1984). Today, China's higher education system has developed into such a size that the centralized administration system will only

weaken the autonomy of the individual institutions and limit their initiatives and vitality in conducting education according to the diversified needs of social and economic development.

Thirdly, the full financial responsibility of the central government for all institutions has made higher education development a heavy financial burden for the central government. If the development of higher education continues to rest mainly on funding from the central government, its speed of development will certainly be affected by a lack of financial resources at the national level.

Since 1977, and continuing to the present, the Chinese government has made many attempts to reform its higher education with particular emphasis on changes in its administration. However, the full potential of educational administration in China's colleges and universities is still a long way from becoming realized. The major problem is that the highly centralized nature of China's higher education structure has by no means been significantly changed. In terms of educational reform there are many aspects to address, but first and foremost is the reform of the administrative system. In China the major concern in educational administration is the over-centralization of the whole system. "Those things should be decentralized and carried out on a local level which require decisions relating par-

ticularly to local needs and which, if done centrally, would prevent or limit desirable initiative and handicap the development of effective local leadership and responsibility" (Hanson, 1991, p.32).

Therefore, the procedural problem is to identify the centralization phenomena in educational administration for China's higher education system.

In order to solve the problems stated above, this study is intended to achieve the two purposes detailed in the section below.

Purpose of the Study

This study has two purposes: (1) to document and analyze the centralization phenomena in China's higher education system and (2) to make suggestions to improve or modify the centralization of China's higher education system in light of the documentation and analysis.

Research Question

To achieve the above-mentioned purposes the following questions are addressed in this study.

1. What relationship exists between the government and individual colleges or universities? What should this relationship be?
2. What kind of relationship exists between the Party committee and the university administration, especially the relationship between the university

president and the university Party committee? What should this relationship be?

3. How much autonomy should the colleges and universities possess?
4. How should higher education institutions move from the centralized planning economy and adapt themselves to the market economy?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study derives from at least three points.

First, this study is among the first research projects that focuses on the centralization phenomena of the higher education system in the People's Republic of China. In the literature review, it has been found that publicly available research on China's higher education system is very limited, and not a single resource identified so far has concentrated only upon the centralization phenomena in China's higher education administration. Therefore, this study puts forward a new research topic which many people have considered "untouchable" in the past.

Secondly, this study brings two research methods together (secondary document analysis and telephone interviewing) and uses data from both Chinese sources and American sources. Therefore, it is designed to try to provide a fairly complete view on the centralized phenomena in China's higher education system. Most of the former studies on

China's higher education reforms have employed only one method, secondary analysis, and have relied chiefly if not entirely on the information sources in one language.

Thirdly, this study tries to clarify some problems and provide some useful and practical suggestions to improve higher education administration in China. The problems of university autonomy, of the relationship between the Party and administration, and of the funding of higher education are all related to the present highly centralized system. If these problems could be solved appropriately, China's higher education would be adapted more easily to the development of modernization and the world.

Definitions of Terms

In an attempt to provide clarity of meaning and uniformity of reference, the following definitions are offered for this study.

Centralization

The word "centralization" is used to refer to the concentration of powers in the central organizations and the unification of individual institutions into a single national system. To be more exact, this word is especially employed to indicate the complete control of the leading educational body and central government over the individual

higher education institutions' administration including enrollment, employment assignment of graduates, hiring of teachers, curricular arrangement, research agendas, and sources and uses of funds.

Decentralization

Decentralization generally refers to the dispersion or distribution of functions and powers from a central authority to regional and local governing bodies. The concept of decentralization refers mainly to the two forms of decentralization: delegation and devolution. Delegation is the transfer of decision-making authority from higher to lower hierarchical levels. ... Devolution is a form of decentralization involving the shifting of authority to an autonomous unit that can act independently. (Hanson, 1985, p.32).

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the independence of subunits of an organization from control by other parts of the organization or even by the whole organization (Katz, 1968, p.18).

Higher Education Administration

Higher education administration refers to the governance, organization, operation, and supervision of higher education institutions.

Higher education reform

According to Flexner (1987), reform refers to an environment fostering change to a better status or form, and improvement by alteration, substitution or abolition. Higher education reform refers to such changes or improvements in higher education institutions or in the whole system.

CCOCCP & SC

CCOCCP & SC is the abbreviation for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and State Council.

HKCFAA

HKCFAA is the abbreviation for the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation.

SEDC

SEDC is the abbreviation for the State Education Commission.

Limitations of the Study

Considering the idiosyncracies and limitations surrounding given research efforts, no research should be taken as definitive by itself. This study is by no means an

exception. It has the following limitations which must be considered in determining the validity of its findings.

1. One of the chief methods used in this study is secondary analysis; ideally this should be based on rich sources of secondary data. However, because of its pioneering nature, this study has been limited in that the depth and scope of its analysis are affected by the availability of the secondary literature sources.

2. Telephone interviewing is another method this study depended on heavily, but the findings of telephone interviews may have been affected by the availability of appropriate interviewees and the sensitivity of the interviewing topics. A more detailed description of the possible problems related to the telephone interviewing is presented in the sample selection section of Chapter Three.

3. The Chinese higher education system is now undergoing reforms, and it is a variable rather than a constant. Therefore, this study may be limited in the sense that the writing of this dissertation has taken more than a year. Some of the descriptions of China's higher education system may be out-of-date when the study is completed.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provided in this chapter is based on the written materials obtained from the above-mentioned libraries in both China and the United States. These written materials included books, journals, newspapers, government documents, and unpublished doctoral dissertations. They chiefly discuss the problems, policies, and prospects of the educational reforms of China's higher education administration systems. These materials can be categorized into the following three broad topics.

1. Major problems existing in the present higher education system in China.
2. Major reforms that were implemented during the past decade.
3. Important tasks to be fulfilled in the present higher education reform in China.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the purposes of this dissertation are to identify and analyze the centralization phenomena in China's higher education system, and, if warranted, to find alternatives to improve or modify that system. Nevertheless, in this literature review not a single article was found that concentrated only on the centralization of China's higher education system. However, when many bits and pieces of information are put together, it is clear that many of those researchers and scholars were

talking about centralization and decentralization but from different perspectives.

Major Problems in China's Higher Education System

Presently what has been considered as the most important national guideline in China's educational reform is the Outline Program for the Reform and Development of Education in China issued in February, 1993 by the Central Party Committee and State Council. Instead of focusing on the higher education system only, this outline program dealt with primary, secondary, and postsecondary education as a whole. When discussing the problems in this big educational system, it used broad terms: "Generally speaking, education in our country is comparatively backward and is not adapted to the needs of accelerating reform, opening to the outside world and constructing modernization. Education has not been placed in a strategic position" (CCOCCP & SC [the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and State Council], 1993, p.3). This outline also stated that the present educational system must be reformed, because "the educational thought, course content, and teaching methodology are not well combined with reality ... and the educational system and managerial mechanisms are not adapted to the daily deepening system reforms in economics,

politics, and science and technology. (CCOCCP & SC, 1993, p.3) However, this document did not present any detailed discussion on these problems.

Nonetheless, some scholars and researchers of higher education have offered some penetrating analyses of the problems existing in China's higher education administration system.

Government and Higher Education Institutions

According to Qingyu Weng (1993) there are three serious problems in China's higher education administration. First, the government interferes too much in higher education administration, and higher education institutions do not have autonomy in running education. Secondly, higher education administration functions of government educational departments at different levels are not clearly and scientifically defined. The administrative power is concentrated too much in the central government, and the local governments have little power to plan higher education development in their own regions or areas. Thirdly, the development of higher education in the past depended too much upon the state appropriations; this has caused a heavy financial burden for the government.

When discussing the reasons why China's higher education institutions are not independent units to conduct

education and why they do not have autonomy, Deguang Yang (1993) identified three factors.

First, the Chinese government has adopted the planned economy as the symbol and advantage of socialism. Hence, the higher education system in China has for a long time been a part of the socialist planned economy and controlled by overly-centralized management planning. Consequently, colleges and universities could not actively serve the needs of the society.

Secondly, the leadership structure in China's higher education administration is a problem. Since the 1950s, higher education institutions have been placed under government leadership: key universities under the central government; provincial universities under provincial governments; and local universities under local governments. However, all these universities have a common characteristic, that is, each institution has its own "grandma" (government agency) to take care of its organization structure, revenue and expense budget, curricula, enrollment, and job assignments of graduates. Moreover, the education department in the central government is the most powerful "grandma" and controls all the colleges and universities by guidelines, policies, and regulations.

Thirdly, the ownership of the higher education institutions is problematic. Since the founding of the People's

Republic of China in 1949, all the colleges and universities have been transformed into public institutions, and government allocations have become the only financial resources for these colleges and universities. By controlling educational revenues and expenses, the government has exercised a firm control over the colleges and universities. Therefore, the present situation is that government controls higher education institutions and the higher education institutions rely on the government.

When discussing how to enlarge the autonomous power of the provincial governments on higher education decision making, Shouwang Ge (1993) argued:

For a long time and influenced by the planning economy system, the decision-making authority and planning power of higher education is chiefly centralized in the central government. This highly centralized administration system once played an active role in the history of higher education development, but today, it has showed more and more weaknesses. Especially, when the market economy system has been established, the over-centralization of power causes the separation of higher education and society. Higher education under such a system can not take initiatives to meet the needs of social development and economic construction (p.6).

In addition, Ge stated that the overly-centralized system discouraged, instead of encouraging, the provincial and local governments' enthusiasm in promoting education.

Many Chinese researchers and educators believe that the basic problem in China's higher education is the central planning and the government's control in all administrative

and educational affairs in higher education institutions (Wang, 1985; Yan, Yang, and Yi, 1992; Ge, 1993; Yu, 1993; Xu, 1993; Wang, 1993; Weng, 1993). "Government educational administrative systems practiced in the past were overly-centralized and too rigid, thus depriving local authorities and schools of their vitality" (Li, 1990, p.1). About this Peilin Wang has provided a detailed description:

For a long time, under the planning economy system, there has formed a structure of government's full responsibility for running education, and the higher education institutions have been under direct control of the government. In running higher education institutions, the structure, scale of running education, and arrangement of specialties and curricula are all decided by the government. In terms of classroom teaching, the teaching outline, teaching plan, and teaching materials are all subject to the related unified regulations. In enrollment and graduate job assignments, it is the government that develops the enrollment plan and assigns the jobs to the graduates. In personnel hiring and arrangement, institutions have to accept the graduates assigned by the government. In financial management, government's appropriations are allocated according to the regulation of 'Comprehensive Quota and Special Appropriations for Special Items', and the institutions' expenses are limited within these government allocations with no money paid retroactively for overexpenditures. For property purchasing, institutions have to apply to the government agencies in the form of the special subject reports, and these reports have to be approved by different authorities at different levels. In faculty promotion, the institutions can only do it within the limitation of the promotion quotas given by the government and the institutional decisions on promotion have to be reevaluated by the government. On the whole, all the activities of the higher education institutions are dominated and controlled by the government through administrative orders and directive plans (Wang, 1993, p.27).

Institutions and their Departments

Generally speaking, higher education administration in China is dominated by the government, but when individual institutions are examined, it is clear that the limited administrative power within an institution chiefly resides at the university level. While colleges and universities are demanding more autonomy from governments at different levels, the leadership at the department level also complains that the power is too much concentrated at the institution level. Yang Peizhen (1986-87) pointed out:

Since 1980, we have implemented the responsibility system for department heads, but their administrative power still remains very limited. The jurisdiction over personnel, finance, and materials basically resides in the hands of the institute leadership. The department office is like the mail room, with the head transmitting information downward and upward. This seriously dampened the enthusiasm of these department leaders and their staffs. We have a seven-member directorship at our institute with twenty-three departments, more than four thousand teachers and staff member of students. In a few years, the number of students will exceed ten thousand. If the department chairpersons and their staffs continue to work as message transmitters, the institute leadership will become bureaucratic and unable to cope with the heavy work load. The institute cannot function efficiently without changing this situation (p.48).

When discussing administration and operation mechanisms within higher education institutions, Dehuan Li (1992) also expressed similar opinions. He wrote that the actual situation within universities was that too much power resided at the institutional level so that the work load at this level

was too heavy. In addition, Li pointed out that the centralization of power at the institutional level caused low efficiency and overstaffed organizations at the university level.

Party Committee and University Administration

Too much administrative power centralized in the government over China's higher education system is certainly a problem, but too much interference into and control of higher education from the Party organizations might be another side of the centralization phenomena and might also cause problems in higher education development.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party has exercised firm leadership over the higher education system. Within any higher education institution, there are parallel systems of authority between the Party organizations headed by the Party secretary and the university administration headed by the president. In each college or university, there is a Party committee, and in each department or division, there is a Party branch. For a long time these Party organizations have been playing a very important role in education administration; and they usually have the final authority over all academic and managerial work (Delany & Paine, 1991). "Decisions about the teaching staff, what would be taught, and expenditures had to meet

with [agreement from] the school's ideological wing. Any administrative decisions about school policy had to be approved by the school's internal Party apparatus" (Delany & Paine, 1991, 36).

In China's higher education institutions, Party leadership systems have gone through repeated changes. At first it was the system of "one man leadership" (institutional Party secretary). Then there was the division of labor among presidents under the leadership of the Party committee. Later there was the administrative committee headed by the president under the leadership of the Party committee. After the Cultural Revolution, the system whereby the president assumed responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee was in effect (Zeng, 1986-87). "All these systems had played a positive role in the past, but all had shortcomings of one kind or another," Zeng Deling stated (1986-87, p.86). When discussing the problem of too much of the Party's leadership, Zeng (1986-87) further stated:

In the past few years, emphasis has been placed on the division of labor between the Party and the administration. The Party's monopoly of administrative affairs has diminished somewhat, and the role of the administration has been , in general, strengthened. But on the whole, the problems of the division of labor between the Party and the administration in institutions of higher learning has not been solved. ... The most basic cause, however, lies in the system itself. The delineation of responsibilities between the Party and the administration is unclear,... The Party leaders of some colleges and universities are preoccupied with administrative routine. The second problem is the

incongruities in one's position, power, and responsibilities. The president has no authority, means, or power to handle important issues (p.86).

Moreover, in many universities the Party leaders are not selected for their academic standing but for their political attributes. Since many of the members of university Party committees are not academic professionals, their administrative leadership in the universities has been criticized as the practice of "laymen leading professionals" which has led to "bureaucratism" (Pepper, 1990).

Consequently, in the mid 1980s it was widely suggested that in higher education institutions a system should be implemented whereby the president would assume full responsibility for the administration (Zeng, 1986-87; Yin, 1986-87, Han, 1986-87). However, after the Tiananmen events of 1989, the Party's leadership over higher education was re-emphasized.

In the literature review, it was noted that the Communist Party's leadership over higher education was emphasized in several documents and articles (Li, 1989: CCOCCP & SC, 1993; CCOCCP, 1993; Zu, 1993).

In a speech to the National Conference of Institutions of Higher Education, Li Tieying, chairman of the SEDC, stated: "All institutions of higher education in the country must be under the absolute leadership of the Communist Party

of China" (Li, 1989). The Outline Program for the Reform and Development of Education in China clearly stated:

Insisting on the Party's leadership over higher education institutions and reinforcing Party organizations is the basic guarantee of implementing educational policies in an all-round way, of accelerating education reform and development, and of improving higher education quality. ... In higher education institutions whereby the president assumes responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee, the Party committee should discuss and decide the important matters, and at the same time guarantee that the administrative leaders exercise their functions. (CCOCCP & SC, 1993, p.23-24.)

"Therefore, the practice of the 'present Responsibility System' was limited and the responsibility system of a president and vice-chancellors under the leadership of the schools CCP's committee was reintroduced" (Cao, 1991, p.114).

Major Higher Education Reforms in the Past Decade

As early as 1977, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping stated: "The key to achieving modernization is the development of science and technology. And unless we pay special attention to education, it will be impossible to develop science and technology" (Postiglione, 1990, p. 3). In 1987, the Party's Thirteenth Congress reaffirmed the importance of education by pointing out:

Fundamentally speaking, progress in science and technology, revitalization of the economy, and the

progress of society are all determined by whether the intellectual quality of the working people is improved and whether a large number of qualified personnel are trained. In any program of the century, education is the foundation. We must place education in a prominent and strategic position and enhance the development of intelligence (SEDC, 1990a, P.81).

Encouraged by the spirit of the above quotations, the Chinese government made many attempts to reform and improve its higher educational system in the past decade. Although these attempts have so far achieved uncertain results, one thing is certain -- the central government has realized the importance of education, so the reform will be continuously carried out with greater efforts.

Reform in the Higher Education Administrative System

First, the central government reorganized the department of education in 1986. In order to coordinate the planning of education with the needs of economic and social development and to ensure the financial needs of education, the original Ministry of Education (MOE) was expanded into the State Education Commission (SEDC). Its members consisted of the Ministers of the State Planning Commission, the State Science and Technology Commission, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Labor (Li,1990).

Speaking of the functional differences and similarities of MOE and SEDC, Zhixin Su (1991) pointed out:

With the abolition of the MOE and the establishment of the State Education Commission, one would assume that China's central educational administration is now much different from that of the past. However, in reality, the SEDC has taken over most of the former structure, personnel as well as work style of the MOE. The abolition of the MOE was not an end to administrative problems, only the beginning of new attempts to solve recurrent problems" (p. 385).

Nevertheless, Su (1991) stated three distinct differences between the SEDC and MOE:

(1) The SEDC possesses more power and responsibility than the MOE. In the past the professional colleges and universities were more controlled by the ministries that sponsored them. For instance, medical colleges were more under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, and engineering institutions were more under various ministries of industry. Since the State Commissions possesses a higher level of authority than the ministries in China's administrative hierarchy, the State Education Commission is directly responsible for all the higher education institutions except military schools.

(2) Due to the status differential, those who have assumed direct command of the country's educational system have higher positions in the State Council.

(3) The State Education Commission will try gradually to shift its focus from micro-management to macro-management.

The second reform that was attempted was for the central government to delegate some decision-making power to local authorities and universities (Wang, 1985; Li, 1990; Pepper, 1990; Hayhoe, 1993;). In recent years it has been more and more clearly recognized that China's current higher education administration system is much too centralized. Therefore, the general trend of the reform in educational administration is toward decentralization. Now the local governments have been given more power and the higher education institutions have been allowed more autonomy. The responsibilities of the State Education Commission have been more confined to fundamental policy making, long range planning and fund allocation. On the premise of fulfilling the national educational objectives, colleges and universities have more power than before in handling various kinds of governance affairs, including specialty orientation, curricular arrangement, use of funds, appointment and removal of personnel and so on. (Wang, 1985; Hayhoe, 1989; Li, 1990; Pepper, 1990).

In the field of science and technology, management has been decentralized also, because management in this field involved matters of a very specific nature. A document of the State Education Commission put forward that the managerial work such as the control of scientific funds; assessment and popularization of research findings; technological

trade; handling of patents; and various services -- all these should be gradually entrusted to academic organizations instead of government departments (SEDC, 1990b).

Thirdly, scientific methods of administration have been given more importance, and the role of the academic professionals in decision making has been emphasized (SEDC, 1990b; Delany & Paine, 1991;). When discussing how to reinforce macroscopic guidance and control, a document of the State Education Commission stated:

Macro-management should be instituted and decision-making processes improved; system engineering and modern management methods should be used to study and devise policies and strategies for the development of science and technology. When making important decisions, more specialists and experts should be invited to participate and their ideas and suggestions adopted. Macro-management is based on statistics, data, and information, and measures should speedily be taken to improve and expand such work (SEDC, 1990b, p. 17).

Such reforms of educational administration are still at a very initial stage, and there is still a long way to go to form a more decentralized educational system. In the literature review, not many detailed descriptions of power delegation to the local governments and individual institutions were discovered.

It is clear that the results of reform so far are uncertain and confusing, and contradictions may be found between the institutions' new powers and the old, centralized, planned system.

In the administration of curricula arrangement, for example, the Party's 1985 decision on education reform pointed out that the individual universities should have "the power to readjust the objectives of various disciplines, formulate teaching plans and programs, and compile teaching materials" (CPC, 1985). But, in fact, the decisive power in deciding the basic curricular pattern, especially the curricula in the humanities and social sciences, still resides in the hands of the State Education Commission. As a case in point the Vice-Commissioner for Education, Teng (1991), emphasized that the purpose of education in humanities and social sciences is to form successors to socialism, not democratic individuals, and that all elective courses should be strictly monitored to ensure they fit into a Marxist framework. According to Hayhoe (1993),

The State Education Commission has affirmed and led the rectification of all curricula in the humanities and social sciences through the establishment of a high-powered committee given the responsibility for providing new program outlines in the major fields. These are to ensure absolute political orthodoxy along with high academic standards (p. 297).

Reform in the Academic Field of Higher Education

A major issue in the academic field has been to reform the overspecialization of knowledge areas. In the early 1980's the curricular structure of Chinese higher education was still based on the Soviet pattern by offering a host of

narrow specialties or majors. The courses provided by these specialties were designed to fit specific job requirements and achieve ultimate fulfillment in the unified job assignment plan for the graduates (Wang,1985; Hayhoe, 1989; Pepper, 1990). Since the mid 1980's more and more people have realized, "China's system was too centralized and its curricula too dated, while courses were too narrowly defined and too rigidly presented" (Pepper, 1990, 137). Hence, the focus of the curricular reform in many colleges and universities has been to try to provide broader knowledge and enhance students' actual abilities in creative thinking and problem solving.

Closely linked with the reform of over-specialty, was the emphasis on quality of teaching and the practical results of education. As stated in a document of the State Education Commission, "In higher education, efforts have been made in the past few years to publicize the guideline that the merit of a college is whether its graduates can meet the society's need for qualified personnel in various fields" (SEDC, 1990a, p. 89). In order to prevent colleges and universities from blindly raising the level of the curriculum, seeking the status of higher academic levels, and other deviations that detach education from practical needs, the State Council promulgated the "Provisional Measures Concerning Curriculum of Institutes of Higher Learn-

ing." In this document, the practicability of higher education curricula was emphasized (SEDC, 1990).

Since 1985, attempts have been made to reform the unified curricula "in principle" with the 1985 decision on education reform. Although the unified curricula have not been completely abandoned, colleges and universities are now authorized to adjust their curricula on the basis of the curricula guidelines issued by the State Education Commission. The national centralized curricula for different courses are chiefly used "for reference" and the national teaching plan for the required courses can be used more flexibly than before when they were enforced like the law (Hayhoe, 1989; Pepper, 1990).

The main initiative of the curriculum reform is still governed by central fiat. For example, "The narrow scope of all academic specialties or majors had been uniformly expanded and the number of specializations reduced" (Pepper, 1990). In an interview, a State Education Commission spokesman confirmed:

The overall structure of the national tertiary-level curriculum continues to be fixed by the center with particular attention paid to: the ratio of applied versus academic courses; the ratio of compulsory versus elective subjects within courses; the content of politics courses; and the new extra-curricular "social practice" requirement that was introduced in 1987 (Pepper, 1990, 138).

The administrators at a provincial university indicated that specialties could not be offered in the university without approval from the State Education Commission, even though these specialties might be in urgent local demand. Also, a large number of "basic" or required courses still have to be offered according to central specifications. The unified curricula and teaching plans are still followed for such courses. However, the institutions may supplement and update content as necessary. (Pepper, 1990).

Still another important reform in the academic field has been the implementation of the credit-hour system in higher education institutions. Since the early 1980's, the American credit system, which was greatly favored before 1949, has become an officially recommended antidote for the "fixed" features of unified curricula. But the present Chinese credit-hour system does not have the mobility of that of the U.S., because the credits in China's colleges and universities can be neither transferred nor stored for future use (Hayhoe, 1989; Pepper, 1990). Moreover, according to Pepper (1990), "Administrators at three universities where the credit system had been introduced by 1980 acknowledged that it could not fulfill its promise so long as the unified curricula, enrollment, and job assignment plans remained basically unchanged" (p. 137).

Reform in Funding Higher Education

While much of the problem in reforming China's higher education system has been related to its administration, there is a lack of financial resources as well (Postiglione, 1990). The basic issue in the financial reform in higher education is how to make colleges and universities completely adapted to the demands of the market economy system (Qian, 1993).

In recent years, the governments and individual universities have made joint efforts to set up a new market economy system to replace the old pattern of the government's funding of higher education.

First, the investment pattern in higher education is now more diversified. A few years ago the funding of higher education was the full responsibility of the central and local governments. Now, besides state appropriations, various social organizations, collective economic units (enterprises funded and operated by collective efforts from different organizations or individuals) and individuals are encouraged to contribute money for education. On the other hand colleges and universities were encouraged to run education jointly with other enterprises that are concerned with the cultivation of their needed personnel. In addition, institutions of higher education may strengthen their economic position by way of undertaking scientific research

tasks, technology transfer, technology development, consultation services, short-term training, and enrolling different kinds of tuition-paying, enterprise-sponsored students (Pan, 1987; Hayhoe, 1989, Li, 1990, Pepper, 1990).

Secondly, the institutional power in financial management has been enlarged. According to the 1985 decisions on educational reform, the higher education institutions are allowed to have the power "to dispose of capital construction investment and of funds allocated by the state" (Hayhoe, 1989, p.41). However, this power in financial management is not absolute. As to actual facility purchasing, the university has to apply to the government agency and get its approval. The difference is that now the government agency gives more consideration and respect to the opinions of the individual institutions (Wang,1993).

Thirdly, in order to better fit the market mechanism, it has been strongly suggested in recent years that higher education institutions should no longer be free of charge to students (Reed, 1988; Gao, 1993; Qian, 1993). To charge reasonable tuition and fees can not only accelerate higher education development, but also increase the competition between higher education institutions. Paying tuition and fees makes the students and universities become two-way-selecting companions. The universities with poor quality and dated knowledge would certainly be forced to change

through selection and competition of the market mechanism (Qian, 1993).

In addition, a new scholarship system has been set up in recent years. Since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, a system of state stipends for students called "grants-in-aid" has been carried out to help students with financial need. However, this kind of grant-in-aid system is considered to cause students to be too dependent on the state and to have an adverse impact on efforts to encourage students to study hard, largely because it awards grants solely on the basis of a student's family's financial situation, rather than the student's academic performance. In the new financial system, scholarships are given only to the excellent students. As to the students who show financial need, necessary subsidies or student loans can be provided (Reed, 1988).

One thing must be pointed out here. The above mentioned reforms may sound significant, but the progress has been slow and a great part of these reforms still remain on paper. The new system has just started, and the old one has not completely died yet. The problem of the lack of financial resources in higher education is far from being resolved. Many universities are still relying chiefly on government allocations. On the other hand governments still have guidelines and regulations to limit the initiatives of

the universities. Indeed, if effectively reforming the centralized system in the matter of curricula has proved so complicated, then changes that touch people's economic and social interests directly in terms of university financing must be even more so (Pepper, 1990).

Important Tasks to be Fulfilled in the Present Higher Education Reform

To understand the tasks remaining to be done in the present higher education reform in China, it is necessary to review some important points in the Outline Program for the Reform and Development of Education in China (1993). This document by the Central Party Committee and State Council presents a most complete and authoritative description of the tasks that would be performed in the immediate future.

According to this outline program, the most important thing in deepening higher education reform is to rebuild the relationships between government and higher education institutions and between the central and local governments. Thus, the government macro-management system should be gradually established, and higher education institutions should directly face the society and conduct education autonomously.

Speaking of the relationship between government and higher education institutions, the outline program pointed

out that colleges and universities should be separated from the government and should become real independent corporative units to manage education. The obligations and rights of higher education institutions should be further clarified through legislation. Autonomy in higher education institutions should be further increased in the administrative affairs such as enrollment, specialty adjustment, institute establishment, hiring and firing, use of funds, promotion, salary distribution, and international exchange. On the other hand, the government functions should be transformed from direct control of colleges and universities to macro-control through legislation, appropriations, planning, information services, policy guidance, and necessary administrative measures. Similar suggestions can be found in Zu (1992); Yan, Yang, and Yi (1992); CCOCCP (1993); Gao, (1993); Yang (1993); and Weng (1993).

As to the relationship between the central and local governments, the outline program states that the functions and responsibilities of the central and provincial governments in higher education administration should be further identified. The central government should only manage the universities that play a model and key role in the national economic and social development. The provincial governments should have power and responsibility to run provincial and local higher education. The provincial governments should

have the power to decide the scale of enrollment and the establishment of new specialties. However, the establishment of new colleges or universities must be assessed and approved by the State Education Commission. Similar opinions were found in Zu (1992); Ge (1993); and Yu (1993).

Another important task regulated by the outline program was to reform the present enrollment and graduates' job assignment system. This task actually includes reforms in the following three areas.

First, it may be necessary to abolish the present nationally unified planning enrollment system and to establish a system which combined national task plans and adjustable plans. Yan, Yang, and Yi (1992), and Chen and Gu (1993) have expressed similar opinions.

Secondly, it is necessary to gradually build up a system in which tuition and fees can be charged, because higher education is not compulsory. Similar opinions were also found in Gao (1993), and Qian (1993).

Thirdly, it is necessary to reform the graduates' job assignment system. The objective for the future is that the state employment plan would be used to place only a minority of university students, and the majority of university students would be responsible for finding their own employment. Similar suggestions can be found in Pepper (1990), Zu (1992), Gao (1993), and Chen and Gu (1993).

The outline program also emphasizes the importance of building the socialist market economy system. It has pointed out that the old allocation mechanism must be reformed, and allocations should be fully used as the means of macro-control over higher education. It further points out that the practice of allocating money according to student numbers should be abolished, and besides the state and local budgets, the higher education institutions should be allowed to raise funds through various channels according to the related regulations. Yan, Yang, and Yi (1992), Qian (1993), and Chen and Gu (1993) expressed similar opinions on this point.

Summary

The major problems in China's higher education system are: (1) the government has too rigidly and tightly controlled higher education institutions and university autonomy is very limited; (2) within the university, the administrative authority resides too much at the university level; (3) the Communist Party's leadership over higher education seriously interferes with the administrative affairs of individual colleges and universities; and (4) higher education institutions are still very much confined in the planned economy system and heavily rely on government appropriations. How to adapt to the market economy mecha-

nisms is still a problem for all colleges and universities in China.

In the past decade, the Chinese government has attempted to reform its higher education administration system and funding system with the emphasis on decentralization, but not many significant changes have taken place in China's higher education system.

The reforms in China's higher education are still going on and the government has attached more importance to these reforms. The general trend of higher education reforms in future is to further limit government influence and control on university administration and let higher education institutions manage education autonomously.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the two qualitative research methods that were employed in this study. The choice of appropriate research methods is a complex decision. It might be proper to apply Rousseau's maxim here. He said: "Toutes les methodes sont bonnes, sauf la mauvaise." An in-depth investigation of a topic requires the use of any and every method that is appropriate (Halls, 1977, p.85). In selecting appropriate methods, however, the most important thing was to decide how well the methods chosen could serve the purpose of the dissertation. As Fowler (1984) stated, the choice of data collection mode must be directly related to the research topic. Considering the complexity of the topic and the pioneering nature of this study, two qualitative research methods have been employed in this descriptive study: one is secondary analysis of written documents, often referred to as secondary research; and the other is telephone interviewing.

Generally speaking, satisfactory results might be achieved by using only one of the methods mentioned above. However, for this dissertation one method was not adequate to achieve the best results because of the three reasons listed below.

First, there were not enough secondary sources on the topic available either in China or the United States, and the literature in the related areas was also very limited. Consequently, secondary analysis alone was not sufficient.

Secondly, due to financial and other logistical limitations, the telephone interviews were only conducted among Chinese scholars and students who were then studying in the United States. Within this group only a few were qualified for and willing to participate the telephone interviewing, so the scale of the interviewing was small.

Thirdly, this study is concerned about the whole picture of the higher education system in the most populous country in the world, but the scholars and students who were interviewed could only provide a partial view of the whole picture. Hence, a methodology which uses both secondary analysis and telephone interviewing can better provide the needed information than either method alone and should, therefore, strengthen the research process. By the analysis of books, newspapers, and government documents, some general information about China's higher education system as a whole was generated. Individual telephone interviews, on the other hand, yielded some personal, in-depth opinions and specific examples.

Further, the two methods also support and depend on each other. By secondary analysis, clues and questions for

telephone interviewing can be generated. In return, the telephone interviewing can further strengthen and consolidate what has been concluded from the secondary analysis. Therefore, a combination of the two methods has been both necessary and important for this study.

In both secondary analysis and telephone interviewing, the Chinese language was employed as a major tool. To assure the accuracy of the use of the Chinese materials, a Chinese scholar was invited to validate the translations, interview tapes and notes. This Chinese scholar is fluent in both Chinese and English, and is familiar with both Chinese and American higher education systems. Dr. Xing Chen, a native of China now working in higher education administration in the U. S. and who earned his Ed.D. in educational administration at Virginia Tech in 1991, served in this role.

Secondary Analysis

"Secondary analysis", according to Stewart (1988, p.11), "is simply a further analysis of information that has already been obtained. Such an analysis may be related to the original purpose for which the data were collected, or may address an issue quite different from that which prompted the original data gathering effort. It may involve the integration of information from several sources or reana-

lysis of the data of a single source."

The secondary analysis in this study consisted of four steps.

The first step was to collect secondary information including different sources of data and other information gathered by others and archived in a certain form. In order to obtain as much information as possible, several major libraries were searched both in China and the United States, namely, the libraries of Virginia Tech and Columbia University in U.S. and those at Beijing University, Xiamen University, and Nanjing University in China. The secondary sources obtained include government documents, books, periodicals, and newspapers.

The second step was to evaluate different secondary sources and to weigh them according to their recency and credibility, because the information collected from secondary sources was not equally reliable or valid. If the collected secondary materials were not carefully evaluated, they might be misleading. In this study the evaluation process followed the three procedures suggested by Stewart (1988).

(1) What was the purpose of the study? The purpose of a particular study can significantly influence the findings and limit their usefulness for other purposes. Therefore, two kinds of secondary materials were given first priority

in the data evaluation process: (a) the studies conducted for the purposes of reforming China's higher education administration, and (b) research carried out for the purposes of discussing the theories and administrative practices of centralization and decentralization.

(2) Who was responsible for collecting the information? In most cases, the more reputable organizations provided more credible information. In China a number of local newspapers or journals were not considered reliable for providing dependable information for academic research, largely because (a) what they report is usually the second hand news of the provincial or central newspapers, and (b) what they report is often poorly edited and misleading. In this study the information obtained from the journals or newspapers sponsored by the organizations equal to or above the provincial level were evaluated as credible.

(3) When was the information collected? Time was an important factor that could significantly influence the usefulness of the information obtained. In recent years, China's higher education has been in a period of rapid changes, and what was right last year might no longer be correct this year. In the evaluation of the collected secondary materials, more recent research was considered more valuable and more useful. The only exception was the materials about China's higher education history.

The third step which is closely related with the second step is to categorize data. The major purpose of this process is to bring order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. This process is difficult, because "Qualitative data are exceedingly complex, and not readily convertible into standard measurable units of objects seen and heard; they vary in level of abstraction, in frequency of occurrence, in relevance to central questions in the research" (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973, p.108).

Once the data categories were built up, the last step was to make logical and critical analysis of the categorized data and write the report. This step was central to the whole process of the secondary analysis. "In the choice of particular words to summarize and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and form -- meaning -- to massive amounts of raw data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p.119). At this stage a list of questions related to centralization issues in China's higher education system were developed for telephone interviewing. A major part of the findings from the secondary analysis were released in literature review and a small part of them were held in abeyance until the telephone interviewing was completed, and then they were described and explained together with the findings from telephone interviews. The final results should be supported by meaningful

statements and ideas generated from both the secondary research and telephone interviews.

Telephone Interviewing

For more than twenty years telephone interviewing has been used as a valid survey method, although many people have failed to recognize or acknowledge this method (Lavrakas, 1987).

The most important advantage of this data collection procedure is the opportunity it provides for quality control over the entire process of interviewing. Another major advantage of telephone interviewing is its cost-efficiency, for it can be used to collect data far more efficiently, from a cost standpoint, than in-person interviewing. Some other advantages of telephone interviewing are its higher anticipated response rate (than can be generated by mail surveys) and the speed at which data can be collected. (Babbie, 1979; Fowler, 1984; Lavrakas, 1987).

The major weakness of telephone interviewing is its limitation on the complexity and length of the interview, because it is not easy to keep a person on the phone for more than 20 minutes. Moreover, because of the lack of visual nonverbal interaction, meaningful visual clues can be easily missed. Despite all these limitations, the advantages of telephone interviewing, on the whole, outweighed

its disadvantages as compared to in-person interviewing and mail surveys. As many studies have shown, the telephone interviewing method is a valid and efficient communication mode (Assaeal & Eastback, 1966; Janofsky, 1971; Kegeles et al., 1969; Lavrakas, 1987; Wilhite, 1987).

Sample Selection

Presently there are about 40 thousand scholars and students from the People's Republic of China studying or working in the United States. Though the total number of the Chinese scholars and students in the United States is substantial, it is very difficult to build up a large survey population for this telephone interviewing for the following reasons.

First, the very nature of this research requires that its participants have a deep understanding of China's higher education system and should be able to provide insightful opinions on its reform. Most of the Chinese scholars and students in the U.S., however, are comparatively young and do not have much understanding and working experience in China's higher education system.

Secondly, most of the scholars and students are sent to the U.S. by the Chinese government, so the topic of this research may be very sensitive to them. In order to avoid political trouble when they go back to China, many scholars

and students may feel very reluctant to participate.

Thirdly, it is difficult to locate all those Chinese scholars and students in the United States. The only name list readily available was that of the Chinese scholars and students at Virginia Tech edited by Virginia Tech's Association of Chinese Scholars and Students. The Chinese scholars and students at other American universities had to be contacted through private channels.

Keeping the above-mentioned difficulties in mind, an interview population of 15 Chinese scholars was identified. The interview participants were selected on the basis of convenience sampling. In order to get this interview population of 15 people, a larger group of 20 to 25 people were contacted initially. A group of Chinese scholars at different American universities were called and asked for their help in recommending appropriate Chinese scholars and students. The identified sample population was contacted on an individual basis. Finally, from this group, 15 Chinese scholars who were willing to participate and met the interview requirements were selected as the interviewees. It was necessary to include at least 10 participants in the sampling process, because the dangers of a biased sample are particularly serious when only a small number of individuals can be included in the research.

In terms of interviewee qualifications, the recommended participants of the telephone interviewing possessed expertise about China's higher education administration by virtue of meeting either of the following criteria:

1. The participants had worked in a higher education institution in the People's Republic of China for at least ten years.
2. The participants had the experience of doing higher educational administrative work at or above the department level.

In American universities faculty members may not understand very well the national and institutional administrative systems, because (1) the faculty members may not be interested in them; and (2) the systems themselves were too diverse and complex to be fully understood. However, things in China are different. First, China's higher education system is highly centralized and unified. In that sense its administration system is much simplified, because all the administrators have to do is to follow the policy, guidelines, and regulations issued from the central and local governments. Secondly, faculty members in China's higher education institutions are very tightly controlled by the administrative system, and moreover, all the faculty members are encouraged or even forced to attend the meetings at which the documents related to school administration from the central and local governments are announced. Therefore,

anyone who has worked in such a system very long should be very conversant with the impact of the system.

Techniques of Telephone Interviewing

Generally, telephone interviewing can be thought of as highly structured, semistructured, or unstructured.

"The structured interview lies close to the questionnaire in both its form and the assumptions underlying its use" (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1992, p.80). In this kind of interview the interviewer usually asks each respondent a brief series of questions that could be answered either yes or no. The respondent's answers were not followed up to obtain greater depth. The major value of structured interviewing is seen to be its systematic approach to data collection.

A semistructured interview is much more flexible than the structured one and it tends to be most favored by educational researchers, for it provides opportunities for the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewer's responses (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1992). At this level the interviewer first asks some structured questions and then probes more deeply, using open-ended questions in order to obtain more complete data. The advantage of the semistructured interview is its reasonable objectivity and its ability to develop a more thorough understanding of the respondent's opinions.

In an unstructured interview the interviewer does not employ a detailed interview guide or a series of detailed questions, but has a general plan and usually asks questions or makes comments intended to lead the respondent to provide data to meet the interviewer's objectives (Borg & Gall, 1989). The strength of the unstructured interview is its greater scope in asking questions and its freer flow of information between the researcher and the subject.

The interview technique that was employed in this study was one that was between semistructured and unstructured interviews.

Based on the secondary analysis, a semistructured interview guide was developed including both closed and open-ended questions.

At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer made brief statements on the purpose of the study, the confidential nature of the interview, and the beneficial uses of the research findings. This step was very important, because the interview questions included some issues very sensitive to the leadership of the Chinese government and the Communist Party. By making some introductory comments, the interviewer developed rapport with the respondent and helped overcome some barriers to the interview in the respondent's mind.

After the respondent gave his or her initial reaction to those questions, the interviewer used the resulting information to probe deeper for additional insight into his central concern. If the respondent gave an incomplete response or the interviewer needed additional information or clarification of a question, probing was used to motivate the respondent to communicate more fully. In the whole process of the interview, the researcher attempted to interact with the respondent as an equal and never talk down to respondents nor try to court their favor. In addition, the interviewer tried not to provide hints nor interrupt the respondent. The interviewer maintained a neutral stance on all questions as much as possible and let the answers get as detailed as possible. However, the researcher did say something like "I see" or "I understand" to indicate to the respondent that communication was going well.

In an attempt to minimize the chance for bias in the telephone interviewing, another voluntary interviewer was invited and trained to do half of the calling. The interviewer's training consisted of two phases. In Phase I, the voluntary interviewer spent an afternoon with the researcher of this study to learn both the background information of this research and the specific information about the particular interview questions. In Phase II, the voluntary interviewer watched three actual interviews conducted by the

researcher so as to acquire some sense of standard work expectancies and understand the importance of quality interviewing.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation for the telephone interviewing consisted of three parts: (1) an advance letter signed by the researcher; (2) an interview guide with all the questions to be asked; (3) a thank-you letter with a brief summary of the data collected from all respondents as a result of the telephone interviews.

The advance letter was used both as a courtesy and an explanation of the purpose of the interview. According to Dillman (1978), an advance letter can encourage the respondents to participate. Without the advance letter the respondents might be surprised by the unexpected telephone call and the request to be interviewed, and might react with suspicion or even hostility.

The advance letter for this research was not only designed as an explanation of the research purpose, but also to make respondents feel comfortable and confident. By expressing appreciation to the respondents and assuring complete confidentiality, the interviewer hoped to establish rapport with the interviewees. In addition, the respondents were informed of the topic area to be covered, the length of

time required for the interview, and when to expect the interviewer's call. Finally, the respondents were encouraged to contact the researcher if they had any questions (See Appendix I).

Enclosed with the advance letter was a self-addressed and postage-paid card. The participants were asked to send this card back to the interviewer and indicate whether he or she was willing to participate and when he or she preferred to be interviewed on the phone.

A semistructured interview guide was developed by the author to be used in the telephone interview. The design of this guide, as Borg and Gall stated (1989), should make it possible to obtain the data required to meet the specific objectives of the study and to standardize the situation to some degree. All the questions to be asked in the interview were listed in this guide in the desired sequence (See Appendix II).

The interview guides were first tried out in a few pilot interviews at Virginia Tech to check respondents' understanding of the questions and respondents' reactions to the interview. The information obtained from these respondents was not included in the final study.

Data Collection Process

In January of 1994, the author contacted his fellow Chinese scholars and students at Virginia Tech and some other American universities to get recommendations and nominations for the possible candidates for telephone interviews. The two criteria discussed in the section of sampling selection were used to select the recommended participants. Those who could meet either one of the requirements were contacted for an interview appointment. The advance letter with the appointment card was mailed to the selected Chinese scholars by the end of February, 1994. When the appointment cards were sent back, the interviewer then called the respondents who were willing to participate to set up a specific interview time convenient to them.

All interviews were conducted and completed before March 15, 1994. Detailed notes were made about each question answered. All interviews were recorded on cassette tape with the permission of the participants and transcribed by the interviewer.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research, as Ely et al. emphasized, involves a continuous and progressive process of data analysis from the beginning of data collection.

This process of analysis guides the researcher to focus and refocus observational and/or interview lenses, to phrase and rephrase research questions, to establish and check emergent hunches, trends, insights, ideas, to face oneself as research instrument (Ely et al., 1993, p.140).

When the final analysis of data took place in this study, the researcher had finished transcribing all the telephone interviews. It was the time for the researcher to sit alone, surrounded with stacks of field notes and cassette tapes, to tackle the questions and tame the chaos by using a coding system (Ely et. al., 1993).

In this study, a wealth of information and a variety of responses were provided chiefly by using the open-ended questions. All of the information obtained was characteristic of an interview and conversational in nature. Accordingly, the specific data analysis for this study was conducted by using some of the points in considering the qualitative analysis of interview and conversational materials suggested by Hitchcock and Hughes (1992). These related points are listed as follows:

1. Familiarity with the transcript. This process requires the researcher to read and reread the interview and conversational materials in order to achieve a thorough familiarity and a sense of coherence of all the materials.

2. Appreciation of time-limits. This point suggests

that reading conversational materials take a fair amount of time. Hence, it is better for a researcher to analyze a few interviews well than many of them badly.

3. Description and analysis. This point emphasizes that description and analysis are not separable in qualitative research and that the researcher moves backwards and forwards between description and explanation. The raw data need to be studied time and again, and the researcher should always go back to the original transcripts and descriptions for further evidence, examples, or clarification.

4. Isolating general units of meaning. This point suggests that the researcher should consider the very general units of meaning, i.e. the broad themes and issues which the respondents frequently refer to in the interview or conversation. The researcher needs to identify, extract, and comment on these general units of meaning.

5. Relating general units of meaning to the research focus. When the general units of meaning are isolated, they should be explored in greater depth and should be related to the research focus, topics, and concerns in order to see whether and to what extent these units of meaning throw light upon them.

Summary

This section of the study has discussed two methods that have been employed in this research: secondary analysis and telephone interviewing.

The secondary analysis consists of information collection in both Chinese and American libraries, information evaluation, categorization, and analysis.

The telephone interviewing method includes discussions of sample selection standards, interviewing techniques, instrumentation, data collection process, and data analysis skills.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter the results of data analysis are presented. They include the analysis of telephone interviews and the analysis of secondary documents. The results generated by these two research methods are related to each other and tied together in the presentation. Since the major part of the secondary analysis has been put forward in the second chapter of this study, the stress of discussion in this chapter is laid chiefly on the results of the telephone interviews.

The telephone interviews were conducted with 15 Chinese visiting scholars at Virginia Tech, Columbia University, the University of Minnesota, and Duke University. Among all these interviewees, eleven were from China's key universities, including two former vice presidents, four former deans, three former department chairpersons, and two professors. Two of these scholars were from provincial universities: one department chairperson and one professor. One other official was from a provincial education commission and one professor from a local university. Of all these interviewees only three were studying educational administration in the United States, while the rest were studying other majors including public administration, comparative education, psychology, engineering, biology, medical

sciences, and physics.

In the pilot telephone interviews, it was found that several questions in the instrument were repetitive, and, therefore, were deleted from the interview guide.

In order to avoid possible bias, seven of the fifteen telephone interviews were conducted by Mr. Lifeng Yang, a doctoral candidate of the Department of Electrical Engineering at Virginia Tech. After a careful examination of the telephone interviewing results obtained by Mr. Yang, no systematic differences with the results from the other eight interviews were noticed.

The secondary document analysis was chiefly based on the materials obtained from the libraries of Virginia Tech, Columbia University, Beijing University, Naijing University, and Xiamen University.

For the sake of a clearer organization and better understanding, the results of the telephone interviews and the secondary document analysis are presented below in the order of the four research questions set out in Chapter One.

Research Question One: What relationship exists between the government and individual colleges or universities? What should this relationship be?

Results of telephone interviews

All the participants of the telephone interviews were asked two questions related to Research Question One. The first question focused on the existing relationship between the government and universities. The second question attempted to collect suggestions on how to improve such a relationship. The interview questions and the most important themes emerging from the analysis of the responses are listed as follows. Illustrative statements were provided where necessary to present more detailed explanations.

- Q1. Does your university have administrative authority in matters such as personnel hiring and firing, enrollment management, departmental specialization, curricula arrangements, salary distribution, and promotion? If not, who has such authority?

This question was the biggest one of all the telephone interview questions, because it touched almost every aspect of university administration. Also, this question was one of the most important questions in this study, because it was closely related not only to Research Question One, but also to Research Question Three (How much autonomy should the colleges and universities possess?). Naturally, a

wealth of information and a variety of responses were collected for this question. The major themes generated from the responses were divided into the following seven categories.

1. Hiring: Ten of the fifteen subjects indicated that their own universities have almost no authority in hiring, because the main source of new faculty members and administrators is the national graduate job assignment program planned by the central government and represented by the State Education Commission. As a former vice president of a key university stated: "We don't have any right in hiring anyone. Every year our university is assigned new graduates from other universities by the State Education Commission."

However, five of the fifteen subjects thought that the universities where they were employed in China have partial authority in personnel hiring. Besides accepting the assigned graduates as a main source of faculty supply, their universities have the right to hire famous scholars and professors from other universities, and they can pay these scholars and professors a salary supplement with

the money they earn by some special programs or social services.

2. Firing: All the subjects agreed that the higher education institutions in China have no authority in personnel firing. A former dean of the personnel office of a key university said: "Even if you know very well that Comrade so-and-so is not fit for his office, you simply can not fire him or her. Nobody has such a right." About this phenomenon a department head expressed a similar worry. He said:

In our country this (no right to fire anyone) is not just a problem with higher education institutions, but a universal weakness of all enterprises and organizations. That is why we often hear complaints about inefficiency and ineffectiveness everywhere we go. This problem is hard to solve because it is related to our country's basic social system -- socialism.

3. Enrollment: All the subjects agreed that the enrollments of China's higher education institutions are chiefly planned and finally decided by the central government as a result of consultation among the State Education Commission, the State Planning Commission, and the State Labor Department. The individual institutions are, to a great

extent, restricted to the government allocated quotas in accordance with national planning. Their right to decide their own enrollment is very much limited.

However, twelve subjects also expressed that in recent years the individual universities have been allowed more and more authority in deciding part of the enrollment. For example, almost all universities can enroll some additional students after meeting governmental quotas for student enrollment. A former dean of student affairs of a key university stated:

Several years ago we could only enroll a certain number of students as part of the unified enrollment plan made by the State Education Commission. Now besides accomplishing the national enrollment plan, our university and many other universities can enroll additional students who pay a certain amount of tuition and fees. By doing so, we earn some extra income for the university to reimburse the extra work the faculty and staff have done.

Several subjects indicated that the enrollment power of the individual universities was being gradually enlarged; now in some universities the amount of additional enrollment had reached 20% of the national enrollment plan.

4. Specialty Orientation: Speaking of the authority of determining specialty orientation, all the fifteen subjects reported that this authority is in the hands of the State Education Commission. The individual universities can not decide it.

A department head of a key university pointed out:

The specialties in China's higher education institutions have been established through the old tradition which, to a great extent, was copied from the former Soviet model. The individual universities can neither establish a new specialty nor eliminate an old one. The best they can do is to add some more subdivisions under the specialty regulated by the State Education Commission. Anyhow, you can not set up new specialties without the permission of the State Education Commission.

A former vice president of academic affairs of a key university considered this problem (universities' lack of authority in determining their own specialties according to their own specific conditions of running education) as the fatal weakness of China's higher education system. He said:

To me, specialty orientation is the weakest part of China's universities. Since every university has to set up its specialty orientation according to the related requirements of the State Education Commission, no university bears its own characteristics. I can not see the strengths or weaknesses in specialization of any university. Universities of the same category usually have exactly the same specialization arrangements. No university can develop its own specialty according to its own advantages.

5. Curricula Arrangements: When asked about the individual universities' authority in deciding curricula arrangement, all the fifteen subjects agreed that the universities have some power in this area. But the power is partial and chiefly restricted to the revision and modification of the old curricular pattern. A department head of a key university pointed out:

The basic frame of curricula has long been decided by the State Education Commission. Now individual universities can adjust part of their curricula according to their own needs, but this kind of adjustment is mainly limited to adding or dropping some elective courses. Some of the compulsory courses in each major are required by the State Education Commission, and some politics courses such as Marxist-Leninist philosophy, the history of the Chinese Communist Party, and political economy are still untouchable.

6. Salary Distribution: All the fifteen subjects reported that the basic salary range of faculty and staff is set up by the State Education Commission and the State Department of Labor and that the individual universities do not have the right to change it. However, in recent years, the salaries of faculty and staff in China's higher education institutions have gradually developed into two parts: one is the basic salary paid from the government allocation and the other is bonus

or premium paid from the university funds collected by enrolling additional students, providing consultation services, and developing technology. Although an individual university can not change the first part of the salary, it has authority to decide the second part.

7. Promotion: All the participants of telephone interviews agreed that the power of promotion chiefly resides in the university. The promotion of a faculty member to a position below associate professor can be decided at the department level, whereas the promotion to that of a full professor must be approved by the university level authority. Nonetheless, eight participants added that the quotas for promotion in each university were decided annually by the State Education Commission and the promotion must be managed in accordance with the criteria set by the State Education Commission.

- Q2. What do you think should be the proper relationship between the government and universities?

All the subjects felt free to talk about this issue. Two major themes emerged from their responses.

1. Nine of the subjects suggested that universities should be completely separated from the government. Universities, they believed, should be independent corporative units to manage education, and government should not interfere too much with university administration. A vice president of a key university said:

Government's control over the university should be eliminated and the university should be completely independent. If there is a role that government wants to play, it should be limited to its financial support only.

2. The other six subjects thought that under the political-economic conditions of present China, the complete separation of the government and universities was impossible and the macro-control of the government over the universities is necessary. As a department head of a key university pointed out:

What should be done in reforming the relationship between the government and universities is to try to gradually limit the excessive government control and extending the decision-making power of the colleges and universities. We can not be completely independent of the government, because the economic level of our country is still

very low. Without the government's support, we can hardly run higher education. If we hope to have increasing financial support from the government, we have to prepare for greater accountability to the government.

Results of secondary document analysis

Although the secondary documents concerning Research Question One were far from abundant, the results generated from them parallel and support the results of telephone interviews. Basically two major themes emerge from the secondary document analysis: one is related to the present relationship between the government and universities, and the other related to the suggestions on how to improve such a relationship. These two themes are presented as follows with illustrative statements provided where necessary.

1. Almost all secondary documents related to Research Question One pointed out that, though some reforms had been made to keep out the excessive control of the government and to enlarge autonomy of universities on some important administrative affairs, the basic structure of government control was still there. A great variety of educational matters are still unified and standardized by the government represented by the State Education

Commissions and the individual universities are still lacking in autonomy (Wang, 1985; Pepper, 1990; Yan, Yang, and Yi, 1992; Ge, 1993; Yu, 1993; Xu, 1993; Weng 1993). As Yan, Yang, and Yi (1992) pointed out:

Basically, the government is still carrying out a centralized, planned administration. The educational system of our country is in a period of reform and transition, but the highly centralized administration system which has been formed for a long time has not showed any basic change with the development of the commodity economy. Presently, higher education is basically managed by the central and local governments and their education agencies at all levels. Many important elements of running education of individual universities are decided by top-down planning (p. 17).

2. Some suggestions on how to improve the relationship between the government and universities were also put forward in several secondary documents (Yan, Yang, and Yi, 1992; Li, 1992; CCOCCP, 1993; Ge, 1993; Yang, 1993; Yu, 1993; Weng, 1993). The basic suggestion on how to reform the government and university relationship is that the centralized power of the government should be gradually decentralized and the major authority of managing education should be delegated to individual universities. The government role in higher education should be limited to macro-control through legislation, appropriation, and information

services. Universities should become independent corporative units to conduct education (For more details see Important Tasks to be Fulfilled in the Present Higher Education Reform in Chapter Two).

Research Question Two: What kind of relationship exists between the Party committee and the university administration, especially the relationship between the university president and the university Party committee? What should this relationship be?

Results of Telephone Interviews

All participants of telephone interviews were asked three questions related to Research Question Two. The first two questions related to the present relationship between the Party and the university administration. The third one is an opinion question and leaves room for suggestions. The questions and the major themes emerging from the responses are presented below with illustrative statements available.

Q1. What is the role of the Party committee in your university?

The responses to this question were a little varied and were divided into the following three categories.

1. Eight subjects believed that in the universities where they were employed in China the university Party committees exercise a leading role and had authority in deciding all important administrative issues. As a dean of a key university put it:

The administrative pattern in our university is the president's responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee. Thus, the Party committee has the final say in determining all important university affairs such as appointing new administrators, promoting faculty and making university policies.

2. Four subjects thought that the function of the Party committees in their universities is to cooperate with, support, and guarantee the work of the university administration. A department head of a key university pointed out:

In our university the Party committee is very supportive and works well with the university administration. As a matter of fact, our university president is a member of the central Party committee and his position is really higher than the university Party secretary. The president himself shows a good combination and cooperation of the Party and university administration.

3. Three subjects expressed that in recent years the power of the Party committees in their universities has been weakened, and they do not interfere into university administration at all. When asked about the function of the Party committee, a former vice president said:

It has no function at all. The Party secretary of our university is a good friend of mine. I often asked him, "What do you do every day in your office?". He told me that he has nothing to do except drinking tea and reading the newspaper. In our university the important things are all decided by the president.

Q2. What is the role of the Party branch in your department?

Two major themes emerge from the responses to this telephone interview question. They are as follows.

1. Nine subjects thought that the department Party branches in their university play two major roles:
(a) supervising and monitoring the department administration headed by the chairperson, and (b) doing ideological work to mold the thoughts and attitudes of faculty and staff. A department Party secretary of a key university said:

I am a department Party secretary and I am also the deputy chairman of the department. The department head is a full professor. He is very devoted to research and teaching in his field and does not care much about the administration affairs in the department. So, I take care of everything from enrollment to graduate job assignments. And whenever I ask for his opinions he always says "yes".

2. Six subjects indicated that the department Party branches in their universities do not playing any

significant roles. Their power is chiefly restricted within the Party organizations. Speaking of educational administration, these subjects reported that at the department level it is the department head who assumes full responsibilities.

- Q3. What do you think should be the proper relationship between the Party organizations and the administrative leadership within the university?

The answers to this telephone interviewing question can also be categorized into three themes.

1. Twelve of the participants of the telephone interviews believed that in an ideal higher education system university presidents and department chairpersons should assume full responsibility for educational and administrative matters and the Party organizations in universities should be separated from university administration. As a faculty member of a key university put it:

The power of the Party committees and the Party branches should be limited to constructing the Party organizations. They should not interfere in educational administration. It will certainly cause problems and frictions if the

Party and the university administration share the power, because both sides will struggle to obtain more power. It is hard to have two tigers on the same mountain.

2. Two participants expressed that they did not care too much whether it was the Party secretary or the president who possessed the power of administration. The basic question is whether this person is really able and capable of administering a university or a department. A department head pointed out:

The usual case is that if the Party secretary is a very able person, he or she will have real power. On the contrary, if the Party secretary is not able and does not have administrative ability to lead a university, then the university president will have real authority.

A faculty member of a key university explained this view from the other side. He stated:

The leadership of the Party can never be avoided in our higher education system, because a university president or a department head must be, first of all, a Party member. Even though we carry out the policy of full responsibility of the president, the president is still led by the Party within the Party organizations and his first job is still to carry out the Party's educational policy. This is not only a problem of higher education. This is a problem of all trades and fields in our country.

3. One participant expressed that he had never thought about the question of the relationship

between the Party and the university administration. He refused to talk about this question.

Results of secondary document analysis

The secondary documents related to Research Question Two were very limited. Two major themes emerge from the analysis of these secondary documents.

1. The reality of China's higher education is that the Party organizations are playing a very important role in administering universities (Zeng, 1986-87; Pepper, 1990; Delany & Paine, 1991; Hayhoe, 1991). As Hayhoe pointed out (1991):

The most powerful figures were the secretaries of the Communist Party branches in each academic department and it was their task to ensure that Party policy was carried out in all teaching and research activity. Their work was extended by political instructors responsible for politics courses, the one field of knowledge seen as broad and integrative, ... The most important decision of most students' lives was that relating to job assignment at the end of their university years, as it has usually been a once-in-a-lifetime decision, and department Party personnel have had the most important jurisdiction over it. They determined how individual students were to be fitted into the job assignments offered to the department by the state planners (p. 125-126).

2. As to the future relationship between the Party and university administration, only a few second-

ary documents were found, and the results of the secondary analysis differed from those of the telephone interviews. It was emphasized in several speeches of government leaders and government documents that the Party's leadership over higher education would be insisted (Li, 1989; CCOCCP & SC, 1993; CCOCCP, 1993; Zu, 1993). In the Outline Program for the Reform and Development of Education in China, it was clearly stated:

Insisting on the Party's leadership over higher education institutions and reinforcing Party organizations is the basic guarantee of implementing educational policies in an all-round way, of accelerating education reform and development, and of improving higher education quality. ... In higher education institutions whereby the president assumes responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee, the Party committee should discuss and decide the important matters, and at the same time guarantee that the administrative leaders exercise their functions. (CCOCCP & SC, 1993, p.23-24.)

Research Question Three: How much autonomy should the colleges and universities possess?

Results of telephone interviews

In the telephone interviews all the subjects were asked how much autonomy they thought that the colleges and universities should have. Their answers to this question were

very similar with each other. All the subjects believed that colleges and universities should be granted full jurisdiction over the use of the funds allocated by the government; complete discretion over specialty orientation and curricula arrangement; more power in planning and determining enrollment of students, the size of university and the number of faculty and staff; and greater authority in personnel hiring and firing.

Results of secondary analysis

The findings generated from the secondary analysis that addressed Research Question Three did not vary very much. The major theme was that higher education institutions should be allowed autonomy as much as possible in deciding their own educational and administrative affairs and should gradually become independent corporative units to manage education (Li, 1992; Yan, Yang, & Yi, 1992; Pu, 1993; Weng, 1993; Yang, 1993; Yuan, 1993).

When discussing how much autonomy universities should have, Z. E. Yuan presented some significant views that were representative of the opinions of many researchers and educators. Yuan wrote (1993):

The state should treat higher education institutions as it treats state-owned enterprises and allow higher education institutions to have the greatest autonomy. The state should let the higher education institutions exercise all their functions to the

greatest extent and serve the development of all programs of the socialist economy on their own initiatives (pp.78-79).

In this article Yuan suggested ten specific rights that the higher education institutions should have. They were listed as follows:

1. Based on the national policy and standards, higher education institutions should be granted the right to decide the use of the government allocations and donations of individuals and social organizations. At the same time the institutions should have the right to charge reasonable tuition and fees.
2. Based on their own particular conditions and special needs, higher education institutions should have the right to decide their own administrative structure and administrator appointments.
3. Under the guidance of the state, higher education institutions should have the right to determine their own specialty orientation and teaching plans so as to demonstrate their own unique characteristics.

4. Based on the law and regulations of the government, higher education institutions should have the right to set up their own regulations to manage their campuses.
5. Under the macro-control of the state and based on the needs of the market and conditions of individual institutions, higher education institutions should have the right to decide their own sizes of institutions and scales of conducting education.
6. Based on the requirements of the nationally unified entrance examinations, higher education institutions should have the right to design their own requirements for admission.
7. Under the premise of meeting national needs, higher education institutions should have the right to guide graduates to labor markets.
8. Based on state criteria, higher education institutions should have the right to hire, fire, and promote faculty, staff, and workers.

9. Under the conditions allowed by the state and based on the financial ability of individual institutions, higher education institutions should have the right to decide the distribution of salaries and benefits within their own institutions.

10. Based on the support of the state and society, higher education institutions should have the right to carry out their own research in basic science, social science, and high technology.

The basic idea in all these suggestions is that general policy should be set by the government; implementation should be controlled by the universities.

Research Question Four: How should higher education institutions move from the centralized planning economy and adapt themselves to the market economy?

Results of telephone interviews

All participants of telephone interviews were asked three questions that directly and indirectly addressed Research Question Four. The questions and the major themes of

the responses are presented as follows. Illustrative statements are provided where necessary.

Q1. What is the main source of revenue for your university?

The responses to this question did not vary at all. All the subjects said that government allocations were the main source of revenue for their universities. The only difference was that universities at different levels get the appropriations from government at different levels: key universities from the central government, provincial universities from the provincial government, and local universities from local governments.

Q2. Does your university have authority in deciding how to dispose of all the revenues?

The responses to this question were divided into two kinds. They are presented as follows.

1. The state allocations to a higher education institution usually included four parts: salaries for faculty and staff, administration expenses, research funds, and funds for capital construction

and equipment. The individual universities are granted considerable jurisdiction power over the use of administrative expenses and research funds, partial discretion over the funds for capital construction and equipment, and no authority for disposing the salary part.

2. Three subjects, one department head and two faculty members, admitted that they did not know much about this question and refused to address it.

- Q3. Presently, there is a lot of discussion in China about setting up a social market economy. What do you think the higher education institutions should do to move out of the old central planning system and become adapted to the new market system?

The responses to this question interwove with one another, and most of the subjects expressed similar opinions. Two major themes were generated from the responses to this question. They are presented as follows and illustrative statements are provided where necessary.

1. Eleven subjects put their emphasis on the economic side of this problem. They thought that to adapt

higher education institutions to the new market system means to administer higher education institutions according to the laws of the market. In order to achieve this purpose, they believe that the higher education institutions must directly face their market, the whole society. Instead of doing what they are told to do by the leading government agencies, higher education institutions should, by themselves, determine the needs of the society and try to meet these needs.

Speaking of specific measures that should be taken to manage education according to the laws of the market, they suggested (a) higher education institutions should first of all have full autonomy to conduct education; (b) colleges and universities should charge tuition and fees so as to reimburse the shortage of educational funds; (c) colleges and universities should adjust their old programs and set up new programs to meet different needs of different levels of the society; (d) higher education institutions should simplify institutional structures and raise work loads of faculty and staff so as to enhance productivity and to increase income of faculty and staff. A department head of a key university stated:

In the planning economy system the size of institutions, the number of faculty and staff, and their work load are all decided by the government. However, in a market system the institutions themselves should be able to decide all this. Now many faculty and staff complain about the low income without noticing their very light work load. If I am allowed to manage my department according to market law, I will give four secretaries' jobs to one secretary and give a big raise to her salary.

2. Four subjects thought it was very hard to practice a real market economy in China's higher education system, because the country's social, economical and political conditions and traditions could hardly accept a complete market system. A dean of a key university said:

I don't think it is an economic problem, but a political problem, a problem concerning a system of the whole country. To practice a market economy, you have to charge tuition and fees. However, because we have a huge population and the income level of most people is still low, it is simply not realistic to ask them to pay tuition. For example, I am a professor, but if you ask me to pay tuition for my sons, I just do not have so much money.

Another vice president expressed similar worries about turning to a market economy. He said:

Higher education institutions should be, financially speaking, a full responsibility of the governments and, of course, I do not mean to have the governments interfering with educational administration. Without government allocations we can hardly manage education well. In recent years many problems came from the drive of the market economy. For example, many teachers and staff do

not concentrate their energy and time on teaching and research, because they are driven by the pressure of the economy and they have to seek second or third jobs in order to support their families. If you turn the world of higher education into a market and ask the universities to earn their own money to conduct education, then the quality of teaching and research will certainly go down. And also some theoretical and basic research will be neglected, because the applied research may make more money.

Results of secondary document analysis

Three major themes were generated from the analysis of secondary documents. They are presented as the follows.

1. It is necessary to introduce market mechanisms into the field of higher education. Managing higher education in a market economy system has several advantages. (a) The market economy system is favorable to increasing autonomy of individual institutions. (b) The market economy system should push higher education institutions to serve the needs of society more actively and stimulate economic development. (c) The market economy system should force the central government to delegate more powers to the local government. (d) The market mechanism will encourage competition among the individual institutions so as to promote teaching and research quality and stimulate the

development of the whole higher education system of the country

2. The law of higher education is different from the laws of the market economy. Therefore, while introducing the market mechanism into the field of higher education, it should not be a matter of rigid copying. The differences of the two must be fully realized. Several differences are pointed out. (a) Higher education institutions are not material production enterprises and can not bring about direct economic benefits. Therefore, they should not be measured by the standards of economic benefits alone. (b) Higher education institutions are non-profit organizations. Their purposes are to develop science, technology and culture, but not to make money. Therefore, the government must invest in higher education and help its development. (c) The output of higher education (learning) is not something that can prove its value immediately. The return of higher education takes time.

3. When discussing specific measures that should be taken to move into the market economy, some researchers pointed out (a) based on the state allo-

cations, higher education institutions should be able to charge tuition and fees and set up a new financial aid system that will combine loan system and scholarship system together. (b) managing higher education should not be only a responsibility of the state; a higher education system consisting of both public and private institutions should be established; (c) individual universities should directly face the needs of the market and should have autonomy in deciding their own administrative and educational matters such as enrollment, graduation, specialty orientation, and curricula arrangement and so on (Ye & Gu, 1992; Gao, 1993; Huang, 1993; Li, 1993; Pu, 1993).

Summary

In this chapter, the results of 15 telephone interviews and secondary document analysis have presented together with the four research questions of this study. The major findings may be summarized as follows.

1. The results generated from both telephone interviews and secondary analysis indicate that in the present higher education system of China, government does control a lot in educational administration of individual universities. In an

ideal higher education structure, government should support and invest in higher education development, but should not interfere too much into the educational and administrative affairs of individual universities.

2. The results generated from both telephone interviews and secondary analysis indicate that in the present China's higher education system, the Party organizations do exercise a great influence and considerable control over the educational and administrative affairs. However, when suggesting the future relationship between the Party and the university administration, the results of telephone interviews differ from the results of the secondary analysis. The results of telephone interviews suggest that Party organizations should be separated from the university administration and the leadership of the Party should be limited to the leadership of the Party members, whereas the results of the secondary analysis indicate that the Party's leadership over higher education will continue to be insisted upon as a basic policy of developing higher education.

3. The results generated from both telephone interviews and secondary analysis indicated that higher education institutions should have much greater autonomy in their own educational and administrative affairs.

4. The results generated from both telephone interviews and secondary analysis indicate that higher education should be managed according the needs of the society and guided by the laws of the market, instead of state planning. However, it must be fully realized that the law of higher education is different from the laws of the market economy.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was two fold: the first purpose was to document and analyze the centralization phenomena in China's higher education system, and the second purpose was to make suggestions to improve or modify the centralization of China's higher education system if the analysis of that system supported such an effort. A major outcome of this study is an analysis of telephone interviews and secondary documents, and four recommendations derived from this analysis.

Fifteen Chinese scholars currently studying in the United States at Virginia Tech, Columbia University, the University of Minnesota, and Duke University participated in the telephone interviews. These participants included faculty members, department heads, and vice presidents from China's key universities, provincial universities, and local universities.

In order to avoid possible bias, seven of the fifteen telephone interviews were conducted by Mr. Lifeng Yang, a doctoral candidate of the Department of Electrical Engineering at Virginia Tech. No systematic differences were

noticed in the telephone interview results obtained respectively by Mr. Yang and the researcher of this study.

The secondary document analysis was chiefly based on the materials obtained from the libraries of Virginia Tech, Columbia University, Beijing University, Nanjing University, and Xiamen University.

By analyzing telephone interviews and secondary documents, it can be concluded that the present higher education system in China is highly centralized, and the autonomy of individual universities is very much limited. Therefore four recommendations have been generated to improve this higher education system. These recommendations mainly focus on how to decentralize the existing higher education administration system in China and how to make the higher education institutions move from the central planning system and towards the new market economy system.

Conclusions

In order to achieve the two purposes of this study, the following research questions were investigated in both telephone interviews and secondary analysis:

1. What relationship exists between the government and individual colleges or universities? What should this relationship be?
2. What kind of relationship exists between the Party committee and the university administration, especially the relationship between the university

president and the university Party committee? What should this relationship be?

3. How much autonomy should the colleges and universities possess?
4. How should higher education institutions move from the centralized planning economy and adapt themselves to the market economy?

The following conclusions were generated from the analysis of the telephone interviews and secondary documents.

With regard to the first research question, it has been identified that the existing higher education system in China is solely the responsibility of, and greatly controlled by, the government, represented mainly by the State Education Commission. The major findings of both the telephone interviews and secondary analysis lead to the conclusion that many academics feel this highly centralized system should be decentralized, and the government should be separated from the day-to-day administrative and educational affairs of the individual institutions. Higher education development needs government support, especially financial support and long-term planning, but the government should not interfere with the educational and administrative matters of individual institutions.

With regard to the second research question, it has been identified that the Communist Party of China does exercise its leadership over the higher education adminis-

tration at the campus level. The major findings of both telephone interviews and secondary analysis lead to the conclusion that many academics feel the Party organizations should be separated from university administration.

With regard to the third research question, it has been identified that the autonomy of individual institutions in present China's higher education system is very much limited. The major findings of both telephone interviews and secondary analysis lead to the conclusion that it is desirable that the autonomy of individual universities should be enlarged.

With regard to the fourth research question, it can be concluded that the present planned economic system in China's higher education is too rigid and unfavorable to higher education's development. The major findings of the telephone interviews and secondary analysis lead to the conclusion that higher education institutions should move out of the old planned economic system and try to more directly meet the needs of the market.

Recommendations

Based on the major findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. Government control over higher education institutions should be restricted to macro-guidance and

- long-term planning; higher education institutions should be gradually managed as independent units.
2. In individual higher education institutions the Party organizations should cooperate with the university administration, whereas the leadership for educational administration should mainly reside with the university president, who's expertise is university administration.
 3. Individual institutions in China's higher education system should have full jurisdiction over such administrative matters as planning enrollment; setting admission requirements; deciding departmental specializations and curricula arrangements; determining research agendas; hiring and firing; distributing salary and benefits; determining the use of educational funds collected by the institution; and appointing and promoting administrators, faculty members, and staff members.
 4. The higher education system in China should directly face the needs of its market and should be diversified according to the diverse demands of the society. In moving towards the market economy system, several measures should be taken: (a) in addition to public universities, the development

of private universities should be encouraged; (b) specialty orientation, curricula arrangement, and research agendas should be directly associated with the needs of the market; (c) reasonable tuition and fees should be charged to those who can afford to pay in order to reimburse part of the basic cost of conducting education; (d) a comprehensive student-aid system of student loans, work-study opportunities, assistantships, and scholarships should be set up and made available to students with financial problems.

Discussion

Feasibility Analysis

If the above recommendations are to be adopted as part of the reform in China's higher education system, there will be some concerns about their feasibility.

Regarding the first recommendation, it will be pretty difficult to let higher education institutions operate independently in the immediate future, because the development of higher education in China has relied very heavily upon the government allocations. If China's higher education institutions are to be managed independently, they should, first of all, become financially independent or, at least, should not rely on government allocations as the sole

major source of revenue. However, considering the country's huge population and its special social-economic conditions presented in Chapter One of this study, it is difficult for individual institutions to manage education chiefly with individual or collective donations and student tuition and fees.

There are two major concerns regarding this issue: (a) On the one hand, the higher education system "should be free as it goes about its tasks of preserving knowledge, imparting knowledge, and developing knowledge. There should be no heavy-handed control of the education process by any external agency" (Stalcup, 1986, p.5). On the other hand, the development of the higher education system needs government support in finance and long-term planning. (b) On the one hand, higher education institutions should try their best to collect funds through all channels including charging tuition and fees to become more independent. On the other hand, these institutions should make themselves "available at the lowest reasonable cost to all who have the ability and initiative to take advantage of their services" (Stalcup, 1986, p.4).

The above-mentioned two contradictions explain why the higher education system should be separated from the government and also explain why it will be difficult. Keeping those two concerns in mind, it is clear to many academics

and others that the higher education system should become independent of the government, but it will be a long, gradual process.

Regarding the second recommendation, it may not be quite feasible, as some telephone interviewees suggested, to completely separate the Party from the university administration. The Communist Party of China has been the leading power of the country's social, political, and economic life. Its leadership over the country has been realized through its deep-rooted organizations at all levels in all social organizations and enterprises. Therefore, considering the Party's special status in China and the political structure of the country mentioned in Chapter One, it is clear to thinking people that it would be more feasible to emphasize the cooperation of the Party and the university administration. However, the Party secretary's work should stress the management of the Party organizations, whereas the president's work stress should be the university's administration.

Regarding the third recommendation, it appears to be completely feasible to have the individual institutions possess full jurisdiction over their own educational and administrative matters, if the relationship between the government and the individual institutions has been properly solved.

Regarding the fourth recommendation, introducing the market economic system into the world of higher education is certainly feasible and favorable to the development of China's higher education. As former President Bush of the U.S.A. pointed out in his 1992 campaign, "Higher education thrives on competition and thrives on choice." One of the major mechanisms that the market economy will bring into the field of higher education will be competition and choice. Also "pluralistic societies require diverse educational alternatives" (Stalcup, 1986, p.5). Today's China is heading toward a pluralistic society, and the market economy will certainly stimulate the development of a diverse education system.

However, when practicing a market economy system in higher education, the differences between higher education institutions and profit-making enterprises should be clearly understood (see Research Question Four in Chapter Four). Competition is good to promote educational development, but it should be restricted within a certain range and guided by certain social and moral standards or laws. In present China there is not even a single piece of higher education law made by the government or higher education associations. Therefore, special attention should be paid to seeing to the proper development of free competition in a free market.

Impact Analysis of the Suggested Decentralization

Reform in modern times has become a constant factor. In the world of higher education, this factor seems to be more active, more constant, and more complex, because the world of higher education has always been affected by the changes in the broader social, economic, and cultural settings, as well as those in students, resources, and the nature of the work force in higher education. China's higher education system is by no means an exception. As has been mentioned in Chapter One of this study, China's higher education system has now developed into such a size that the highly centralized administrative system can hardly manage. It is now facing very complex and contradictory pressures. On the one hand, society demands that colleges and universities take a larger, more diverse role in contemporary Chinese life. On the other hand, the present centralized administrative system and the scarcity of financial and other resources have seriously restricted their ability to preserve the best of the past while simultaneously striking out in new directions. The only way out is to reform and redirect the present system.

However, no perfect results can be achieved in any reform. If the reform in China's higher education could be decentralized as has been suggested in the previous section, there would be pluses and minuses, too.

For many years the institutions of higher education in China have operated in a highly centralized system chiefly for the needs of the governments at different levels. Once they are put in a decentralized system and reformed to serve the needs of the society more directly, the first advantage they may achieve is that they can more flexibly and better serve the diverse needs of the society, because of their better familiarity with local conditions and needs. In this case, the former highly specialized institutions may become more and more comprehensive. Many universities that formally served the purposes and needs of the central government may readjust their missions to better reflect the needs of local society. Therefore, higher education institutions with their new specialties and programs will certainly better meet the diverse needs of both the nation and the local society.

The second advantage that may be achieved in a decentralized system is that institutional effectiveness will be enhanced by way of improving the quality of decision making. As Chaffee and Tierney pointed out (1988):

Institutions have unique histories, symbols, and myths that create particular climates and cultures for the participants. These climates and cultures, in turn, influence decisions and actions that ultimately determine the organizations' effectiveness (p.6).

In a highly centralized system, the central authority can hardly plan the operation of individual institutions

according to their own characteristics. The institutional leaders, on the other hand, only do what their upper leadership tells them to do. They have neither interest nor pressure, nor authority to study and resolve the particular problems existing in their particular institutional climates and cultures. Whereas, in a decentralized system that allows a broader, participative base for the distribution of authority, the institutional leaders are more likely to try much harder to obtain information about the complexities of their institutions' climate and culture, and will attempt to make decisions that will more accurately represent the needs and interests of all the constituents of the whole institution. This is because in a decentralized system, as was suggested in the previous section, the stress of responsibility will shift from governments to institutions, so the universities' leaders will have more pressure and autonomous power to decide their own affairs.

Thirdly, in a decentralized system, the higher education institutions can utilize available resources more efficiently. This is because (1) the universities rely more upon their own financial resources, instead of government support, and (2) the university leaders usually have a better understanding of their own universities and their environmental needs that will lead to a better match between

demand and supply. Based on such assumptions Weiler stated (1990):

In the short term, decentralization may involve a certain loss of efficiency as a result of diminished economies of scale; over the medium and the long term, however, the expectation is that decentralized systems of governance will use available resources more wisely and efficiently (p.437).

Finally, in a decentralized system individual institutions can no longer rely on government appropriation as the sole source of funds for operation. They have to create their own ways of collecting their own educational funds. Consequently, a decentralized system may stimulate the development of a better mix of funding sources for individual institutions and, therefore, will ease financial pressures on the government.

Nonetheless, there are also some disadvantages when higher education institutions are administered in a decentralized system.

First, higher education development in China is not well balanced in each province. Colleges and universities are chiefly concentrated in the big cities in the central, southern, and northern parts. In the north-western part of the country and in some other remote areas, the development of higher education is very slow. In a decentralized system, the development of higher education in the less developed, remote areas may be more difficult, because such

a system does not have the advantage of the centralized system of utilizing economies of scale and allowing greater mobility of resources to where they are most needed.

Secondly, when China's higher education system is decentralized as has been suggested in the former section, a considerable amount of government subsidies for the general welfare of faculty and staff may no longer be available. (In present China's higher education system, medical care, housing, and other services are provided by the government.) Moreover, when individual universities become greatly decentralized, the president's concern for faculty's and staff's life will not be so strong as it is now. As a telephone interview participant pointed out, "In China's universities, it is even harder to be a president or a department head, because you not only take care of educational administration, you also take care of the life of faculty and staff."

Thirdly, when all authority is delegated to individual institutions, the individual institutions may have difficulty in handling this authority well. For example, when student enrollment and graduate job assignment become a full responsibility of individual institutions, some of the institutions may lack the ability to match them well with market needs. Therefore, some new threats to higher educa-

tion may appear. There may be a shortage of enrollment and some graduates may not be able to find a job.

The above discussion about the disadvantages of the suggested decentralization of China's higher education system has, in fact, raised some new problems that may be used as research questions for further study on China's higher education decentralization as discussed in the following section.

One thing must be kept in mind while discussing the strengths and weaknesses of decentralization: the reforms suggested in this study are not intended to create a completely decentralized system. Government's support and direction in higher education development is always important and necessary. The point of view expressed in this study is in relation to the current, highly centralized structure of China's higher education.

Implications

In this study the centralization phenomena of China's higher education system have been identified and documented. In order to solve these centralization problems, recommendations to decentralize this system have been made. However, if China's higher education system is to be decentralized in the ways that have been suggested in this study, some new problems may appear. Some of the possible new

problems under the decentralized system have been anticipated when discussing the disadvantages of decentralization, but there might be more than those anticipated ones in reality.

Therefore, there is a need to have further studies examining the other side of decentralization and providing recommendations on how to solve the problems of a decentralized higher education system. One possible direction for future studies is (a) to examine the problems of decentralized higher educational systems in some developed countries, (b) to determine why these problems exist, (c) to develop possible solutions, and (d) make recommendations according to China's specific conditions to anticipate and prevent the possible problems in the future.

A higher education system can hardly stand alone as a really independent structure in any country, for it is closely related with and affected by the country's social system, cultural tradition, and political structure. Hence, whenever a certain educational system is studied, full consideration must be given to the specific conditions of the country's social, economic, and political situation.

Yuan (1993) correctly pointed out:

When the contemporary higher education reforms of different countries are examined, the general trend is: all the countries, where centralization and state control have been traditionally emphasized, are now attempting to enlarge university autonomy, whereas all the countries, where uni-

versity autonomy and professorate management have been traditionally emphasized, are now attempting to strengthen government control and macro-management (p. 76).

Therefore, when a higher educational system is examined, it can not be judged simply by centralization or decentralization, because neither of them is exclusively good or bad. The key to this question is whether the degree of centralization or decentralization is reasonable and proper. Neither centralized administration systems nor decentralized administration systems should be practiced to an extreme. These two types of administrative styles should exist in a dialectical unity.

An ideal higher education system should be, as Stalcup suggested (1986), "Operated with goals of sensible economy, and absence of unnecessary duplication, a responsiveness to coordination, and the ability to meet changing needs with new programs and new techniques, promptly and efficiently" (p.5).

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APPENDICES

I

Advance Letter for Telephone Interviewing

Virginia



Tech

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Feb. 10, 1994

Academic Assessment Program

132 Hillcrest Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0157
(703) 231-6995 Fax: (703) 231-7219 Internet: muffo@vt.edu

Dear Mr. _____,

As a Ph.D candidate in the division of Administrative and Educational Services of Virginia Tech, I have initiated a research project to study China's higher education system. This descriptive research focuses on an analytical discussion of the highly centralized educational structure in China, and seeks to generate some recommendations on how to make this structure more reasonably decentralized.

Because of your experience in China's higher education system, you have been identified as a scholar who can provide insightful opinions about reforms in this system. During the period of February 15 through March 5, 1994, I would like to interview you on the telephone to obtain information concerning the centralization phenomena in China's higher education system, especially in the university where you had worked for so many years before you came to the U.S.. Moreover, it would be highly appreciated if you could provide some suggestions on how to improve the present situation.

The interview should take no more than 30 minutes. Enclosed in this letter, there is a self-addressed and postage-paid appointment card. Please return it soon as possible, and indicate your phone number, whether you will be willing to participate, and when you prefer to be interviewed. I will contact you on the phone some time before the interview to set up a specific time convenient to you.

All the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used only for research purposes. A summary of the findings will be provided at the completion of the study. Your help is essential to the success of this study. Thank you very much for your support.

If you have any questions, please call me at (703) 552-4502 or write me at the address provided above.

Sincerely yours,

Jieli Zhao

II

Protocol Sheet for Telephone Interviewing

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING
ON THE CENTRALIZED SYSTEM OF CHINA'S HIGHER EDUCATION**

(All the responses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for research purposes. Thank you for your support and cooperation.)

Part One: Realities

In this part of the questionnaire, all the questions are related to the educational administration reality in the university where you worked before you came to the United States. Therefore, whenever "your university" is mentioned in the following questions, it refers to the university where you were employed in China.

1. Is your university a key university, a provincial university, or a local university? What is your position your university?

2. Does your university have administrative authority in matters such as personnel hiring and firing, enrollment management, departmental specialization orientation, curricula arrangement, salary distribution, and promotion? If not, who has such authority?

3. What is the main source of revenue for your university?

4. Does your university have authority in deciding how to dispose of all the revenues?

5. Within the university, where do you think the power is? Is it at the university level or at the department level?
6. What is the role of the Party committee in your university?
7. What is the role of the Party branch in your department?

Part Two: Suggestions

1. What do you think should be the proper relationship between the government and universities?
2. How much autonomy do you think should the colleges and universities possess?
3. Presently, there is a lot of discussion in China about setting up a socialist market economy. What do you think the higher education institutions should do to move out of the old central planning system and become adapted to the new market system?

4. What do you think should be the proper relationship between the Party organizations and the administrative leadership within the university?

III

Verification Letter from Dr. Xing Cheng

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 13, 1994

TO: John Muffo, Chairman
Doctoral Dissertation Committee of Jielu Zhao

FROM: Xing Cheng, Research Analyst 

SUBJECT: Chinese Sources of Jielu Zhao's Dissertation

I have listened to the telephone interview tapes and read the secondary (printed) documents used in Mr. Jielu Zhao's dissertation. I agree with Mr. Zhao's statements and hereby verify that his translation is accurate and his usage of the Chinese sources is proper and valid as far as I can determine.

Please contact me if you or other members of the committee would like to discuss this matter further.

VITA

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name: Jielu Zhao
Date of Birth: January 8, 1956

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University,
Blacksburg, VA, 1994, Ph.D. in Educational
Administration with specialization in Higher
Education Administration

Southwest China Teachers University, Chongqing,
Sichuan, P.R. China, 1988, M.A. in English
Language and Literature

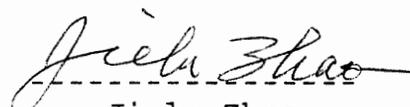
III. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1986 - 1990

Lecturer, Department of English Language & Literature,
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1978 - 1986

Assistant Teacher, Department of English Language &
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Jielu Zhao