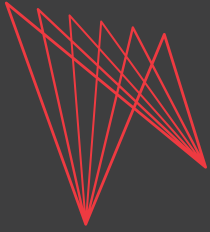


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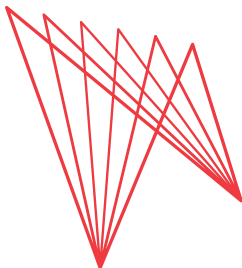
INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND OPEN TALENT POLICIES

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND OPEN TALENT POLICIES

November 13-14, 2014

Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China

Organized by the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science, the School of Public Administration of Southwest Jiaotong University, and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada



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OVERVIEW

The International Seminar on Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Open Talent Policies was an opportunity for Canadian, Chinese and other international participants to discuss best practices and theories on the implementation of innovation-driven development strategies and open talent policies, and the importance of innovative talent. During the course of the discussions, experts had the opportunity to share different national experiences with innovation strategies, the construction of national innovation systems, and ways to foster talent.

Several themes emerged during the seminar, including:

- How should we conceptualize innovation? How do we define innovation and what are its key components?
- Why is a discussion on innovation essential for both Canada and China?
- What is the role of the government in stimulating innovation?
- What are the key barriers to innovation? How does the fear of failure impede innovation?
- Based on the experiences of different countries, what are the ways to create an innovation platform?
- What are the elements of an open talent policy?
- What drives and impedes international collaboration on innovation? What are the opportunities for collaboration between Canada and China?

CONFERENCE REPORT

1. CONCEPTUALIZING INNOVATION

Innovation can be defined differently by different people.

During the seminar, three frameworks were used to define innovation. First, innovation can be defined according to what it is not. Innovation is not an invention, idea or product. Innovation should not focus solely on technological innovation. Rather, it can include other aspects such as social innovation, business innovation, or process innovation. Second, innovation does not need to be completely new. Although innovation is often equated with cutting-edge inventions, 85percent of successful companies offer improvements to existing products and techniques, rather than providing radically new products or insights. Third, innovation can be defined in the context of an innovation ecosystem. Innovation is more than a linear process involving inputs and outputs. An innovation ecosystem stresses the interaction

and relationship between four key components: universities and the education system; mechanisms for mentorship; financing and capital; and, market exposure.

Innovation can also be conceptualized according to life cycles, with different actors best able to meet the needs of companies at various stages of growth. The needs of early-stage startups are best met by the services of incubators, or even ‘pre-incubators.’ As a startup seeks to attract business, it would benefit more from the assistance of accelerators. Upon successfully attracting business but seeking to grow further, a company may seek the support of venture capitalists and as it matures and stabilizes its position, a company may benefit from forging strategic alliances.

Innovation can also be conceptualized in terms of an amalgamation of the efforts exerted by parties at different levels – international , national, organizational, and individual. Parties involved typically include multilateral institutions, government, corporations, innovation parks

and labs, non-governmental organizations, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers. The plethora of parties involved signifies that a great degree of vertical coordination is required. At the same time, because innovation often cuts across different disciplines, a substantial degree of horizontal coordination among different departments is also necessary.

Although innovation is often seen as being in conflict with tradition, a number of participants stressed that this is not necessarily the case. Tradition and cultural legacies may often serve as the inspiration for innovative ideas.

2. THE RATIONALE FOR DISCUSSING INNOVATION

Innovation has become the new catchphrase for growth and economic development.

But beyond recognizing the essential role of innovation in accelerating economic growth, the seminar highlighted country-specific reasons for both parties to pursue a dialogue on innovation.

China's economy is currently the second largest in the world. However, the size of its economy has not resulted in a high degree of innovation, as China still ranks low on indices of international innovation. At the same time, as China's economy continues to mature, it recognizes that its former model of growth, which was based on the manufacture of cheap exports, is no longer sustainable. Rising wages, the exhaustion of its natural resources and rising levels of pollution all present a pressing rationale to re-orient the Chinese economy towards the provision of high-value, technology-intensive goods and services.

Canada, on the other hand, has been plagued with what is called the "Canadian innovation paradox." Although Canada has an excellent education system and world-class universities, academic excellence has not led to business innovation. High rates of spending for higher education research can be contrasted with low rates of spending for R&D among businesses and enterprises. A possible explanation for this phenomenon is that the Canadian business environment is not adequately stimulating more innovation. The Canadian business environment is motivated by many other factors aside from innovation, such as its heavy dependence on trade with the U.S., competition among businesses and government regulation of markets. At the same time, a more conventional mentality favours the separation of the academe from industry, although this mentality has started to change with the recognition that academics can have an impact on the country's economic growth by helping to stimulate innovation.



Eva Busza, Vice President, Research and Programs, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

3. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The role of government can be described by reference to two extremes.

On one end, government is key in fostering innovation by providing the resources and support systems that companies require. On the other end, governments can be portrayed as bureaucratic entities that hinder the natural growth of the market, crowd out private enterprises and seek to play the role that the private sector can play more efficiently. How should we define the relationship between the government and the private sector? What kind of role should each play?

The extent to which governments play a role differs according to each society. Many of the participants agreed that there is a role for government to play at many levels, even in strongly capitalist markets. At the most rudimentary level, government needs to create an environment that is conducive to innovation. By creating an environment for quality living, encompassing elements as diverse as education, culture, physical environment, sustainability, and international linkages, governments are able to attract more talented people who can contribute to the building of better companies. Governments are also needed to intervene when markets fail to provide what is required (e.g. funding). Another panelist stressed government's role in enhancing competence and networks, which are both key to successful innovation. Competence is defined as a combination of academic knowledge (knowledge that can be articulated, codified and transmitted through academic or other settings) and tacit knowledge (knowledge that cannot be articulated, but gained through experience).

Because the free exchange of ideas is crucial in spurring innovation, the government has an important responsibility in helping to create an innovation ecosystem that allows actors from different parts of this ecosystem to interact and exchange their ideas. Government also plays a key role in shaping public policy that will allow the free movement of talent and facilitate international exchange as innovation becomes more global in scope.

Within the Chinese context, government undeniably plays a strong role and it has been effective in setting the agenda, fostering talent, implementing industrial policies, and creating many of the components required in an innovation ecosystem. One panelist stated that it is not a question of whether the Chinese government should play a role, but how it could be more effective in playing its role to avoid mistakes of the past, such as the creation of overcapacity and surplus that could not meet the needs of the market. As the Chinese economy continues to transition, the government should learn to adjust the ways it supports the economy.

While it is undeniable that the Chinese government currently plays an important and effective role in fostering innovation, one panelist argued that this will not be sustainable in the long run. At the same time, China continues to evolve and the rule of law is growing stronger.

4. BARRIERS TO INNOVATION

Barriers to innovation can be categorized into three levels: (1) barriers at the societal level, including government; (2) barriers at the organizational level; and (3) barriers at the personal level.

Within the theoretical dimension, although much has been written about innovation, the literature reflects a Western perspective. China still has not fully developed its own theoretical understanding of innovation based on its own pathway towards growth.

The fear of failure, which continues to be a barrier to innovation, received much attention during the seminar. One panelist categorized failure according to the "failure of the idea" and "failure of the team," arguing that wrong ideas can often be remedied, but the inability of the management team to adapt to the needs of the market is a bigger cause of failure. Within Canada, the culture towards failure has evolved and society has gradually become more tolerant of failure. Within China, attitudes towards failure can differ among different parties. Despite the growing recognition that failure can provide valuable lessons, failure continues to be a sensitive issue at the government level. While markets are slowly learning to tolerate failure, companies still seek to minimize failures as much as possible. Tolerance towards failure also depends on the reasons for failure. Failure is typically more tolerated when it is seen as the result of uncontrollable risk factors rather than the entrepreneur's personal faults.

Participants repeatedly stressed the importance of human capital to fostering innovation. Yet, there are several challenges to nurturing talent.

The current education system is not equipping students with the skills they need to fill today's job openings, leading to a mismatch between degrees earned or academic training, on one hand, and the nature of the work they find after graduation, on the other. Some Chinese participants also believed that the education system stifles creativity. According to one panelist, barriers to nurturing talent also include a lack of imagination, weak curiosity, a focus on 'explaining' rather than 'doing' and the lack of linkages between scientific disciplines. Another panelist pointed out that impediments to innovation that can easily be solved by money are not real impediments. Obstacles that money cannot easily address include those that deal with networks, skills, personality, and human mentality.

Other important barriers to capital include shorter technology life cycles and difficulties in getting access to capital. Even in cases where the company successfully receives venture capital funding, it can place undesired pressure on the company as venture capital firms are eager to recover their returns on investment. Going public prematurely and the difficulty in finding the right investing partners are also key impediments. How government and the private sector can work hand in hand to address the issue of financing most effectively continues to be an issue of discussion.

Within the Chinese context, government policies can serve as an impediment to innovation as China continues to deal with changes in its economic power and the pains of reform. Good policies implemented in the past may eventually become barriers to innovation as those policies become obsolete. Policies with important implications for innovation remain fragmented and uncoordinated – a point demonstrated by the existence of more than 5,000 science and technology policies. One panelist argued that



Wang Zhen, Vice President, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

policymakers need to consider how policies combine and coordinate with one another rather than considering each policy based on its own merit. In addition, business competition and the desire for more profit and market share impedes innovation cooperation within the private sector. The desire for instant success has also led to short-term and short-sighted types of innovation. Furthermore, among many government officials and company employees, the mentality of pursuing innovation for the sake of innovation has created an obsession with numbers and quotas in order to show off ‘achievements’ for political gain. Another panelist also argued that the lines separating the roles of government, the private sector, universities, and research labs have been blurred. By performing functions that were not originally intended for them, these actors create inefficiencies that impede innovation.

5. CREATING AN INNOVATION PLATFORM

The seminar highlighted a number of models pursued by different countries and regions.

A Chinese panelist enumerated the elements that are essential in creating an innovation platform. These elements stress: quality over quantity; open-minded thinking; tolerance for failure; and, an emphasis on results rather than methods, as innovative ideas often involve unconventional methods. He argued that creating an innovation platform within the Chinese context will require several transformations. First, there needs to be a shift away from a focus on attracting capital and companies, and towards the formation of specialized industrial clusters. Second, there needs to be shift away from a focus on offering preferential treatment to stimulate innovation, and towards the improvement of the general environment. Third, there needs to be shift away from government-led initiatives, and towards initiatives led by the private sector (albeit with government guidance).

The Finnish experience demonstrated that creating an innovation platform would require an integrated policy that strengthens the linkage between innovation and social development, and promotes cooperation between the public and private sectors. An integrated policy recognizes that stimulating innovation requires a comprehensive approach designed to create an environment ideal for quality living. As a result, the Finnish government has invested extensively in education and health care. Programs are also in place to enhance individual development. A national integrated policy is built by considering both the local and national contexts. Mechanisms that support innovation at the local level are

designed according to local demand and market preferences. This, in turn, is complemented by policies at the national level that seek to identify key sectors in the future and provide necessary support to the nurturing of skilled personnel in these sectors.



Philippe Rheault, Consul-General of Canada, Chongqing

Another panelist discussed the case of Nanjing and its existing operations, which are designed to stimulate innovation and attract talent. The first is a university-led operation, where the university establishes a small-scale industrial park. The second type of operation is a company-led one, where a big company sets up an innovation park and attracts experts to work in the park. In the third operation, researchers and professors can collaborate to set up incubators. And in the fourth, an investment firm may set up an innovation park.

Although some of the panelists defined an innovation platform as a large-scale industrial or innovation park, the Danish model aims to realize the goal of individuals being able to “produce anything anywhere.” This model envisions that individuals provided with necessary tools, such as a 3D printer and software, together with adequate training, can become entrepreneurs. However, the realization of the vision that entrepreneurs can “produce anything anywhere” is largely dependent on the existence of well-built infrastructure, both virtual and physical. Instead of clustered spaces, the model seeks to establish a distributed network, with spaces ranging from micro-spaces, to labs and innovation hubs.

Discussions also showed that countries have different strengths in stimulating innovation at different stages. The environment in the U.S. is most conducive to raising capital, and the U.S. government supports young companies through the procurement of pre-mature products. The Canadian government’s Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax Incentive Program (SRED) offers tax credits to companies able to prove they are engaged in R&D activities, which makes Canada ideal for very early-stage startups. On the other hand, more cautious behaviour in China places the emphasis on supporting startups during later stages.

6. AN OPEN TALENT POLICY

Human capital is inextricably linked to innovation.

Enhancing human capital is essential in driving sustainable innovation. Yet, China and Canada are both suffering from a decline in the demographic dividend – an increase in the proportion of working-age members of the population that contribute to productivity and economic growth. Consequently, higher rates of productivity are required to sustain current standards of living.

The seminar highlighted a framework for the enhancement of human capital through the development, attraction, and utilization of talent. It is important to note that attracting talent goes beyond offering opportunities for employment, career advancement, and competitive salary packages. While these factors are significant, more attention must be paid to the creation of a general environment that is conducive to a high quality of life, which includes the availability of good schools and hospitals, a clean environment, a welcoming culture, long-term sustainability, and linkages to the international community. However, attracting foreign talent must also be complemented by the development of talent, and Chinese panelists stressed the need to attract the type of international talent that would aid China in developing domestic talent.

The Canadian experience demonstrated that immigration has been one of the country's key strategies in addressing the decline in its demographic dividend, with immigrants now constituting 20 percent of the total population. While the country has been successful in attracting highly educated immigrants, it has been less successful in fully using their

skills and encouraging effective participation and integration. One of the most common impediments, not only in Canada but also in most other countries, is the recognition of foreign degrees, credentials, and experiences. This issue continues to be a concern that many governments are currently addressing.

Although an open talent policy is often equated with international openness, the Chinese panelists stressed that openness should also emphasize the freer movement of people domestically. Both China and Canada have experienced regional inequality in terms of access to skilled personnel, with more remote or less developed regions being less able to attract talent, thus setting off a chronic cycle that stunts the economic development of these areas.



Yu Xing'an, President, Chinese Academy of Personnel Science

7. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

Because innovation is global in scope rather than constricted to national borders, international collaboration plays an important role in stimulating innovation.

At the same time, the success of a national integrated policy in stimulating innovation, as the Finnish experience demonstrated, is also linked to the comprehensiveness of the entire innovation system, including support systems embedded within international institutions and multilateral frameworks.

Universities play a crucial role as a catalyst of international collaboration. But beyond their role as a place for inventions and new ideas, universities also must be willing to take on a greater role to forge what is called ‘partnerships 2.0.’ Such partnerships highlight an expanded scope of collaboration, not only among universities, but also together with the public and private sector in order to solve global challenges. To achieve this, such partnerships must be established with clear rules of engagement. Between Canada and China, we have witnessed a growth of not only joint education programs, but also joint research programs and labs.

Competition for skills and rare talent may be seen as an impediment to international cooperation on innovation. This can be seen in China’s Thousand Talent program, which was reciprocated by American policies designed to attract ten thousand teachers to the U.S. Yet, it must be noted that the development of skills and talent is a vehicle for cooperation as well. An open talent policy involves both cooperation and competition, and with the increasingly free movement of

people around the globe, talent is jointly nurtured by the public sector, multinational corporations, universities, and other parties.

Intellectual property issues are a potential detriment to international collaboration. To address these issues, parties must be willing to discuss the rules of engagement before embarking on a joint project, particularly when dealing with radically different intellectual property regimes. A new framework that stresses the sharing of IP, rather than concern over infringement, should also be established.

Finally, the seminar highlighted many potential avenues of cooperation between Canada and China. Because the Canadian market is much smaller in size, there is less motivation for companies to innovate. However, access to the Chinese market allows Canadian companies to take advantage of economies of scale, thus creating more incentives to innovate. At the same time, the merging of conventional industries with new technologies provides a promising avenue of cooperation. With China’s New Silk Road program, China’s western region also offers the new frontier for innovation collaboration. Cities in this area, such as Chengdu, should not be passive recipients of the benefits of the New Silk Road, but proactively seek out new opportunities.



Stewart Beck, President and CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

PROGRAM

November 13, 2014

08:45-09:15 **Opening Remarks**

Moderator: Xing'an YU, President, Chinese Academy of Personnel Science

Speakers:

- Xian HE, Vice Minister of Human Resources and Social Security of the PRC
- Jianjun WANG, Sichuan Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security
- Shunhong WANG, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Southwest Jiaotong University
- Philippe Rheault, Canadian Consul-General in Chongqing

09:25-10:00 **Keynote Speeches**

Speakers:

- Zhimin TANG, Vice President of Chinese Academy of Personnel Science
- Stewart Beck, President and CEO, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

10:00-10:20 **Break**

10:20-11:40 **Panel Discussion 1: Innovation Strategy and Innovation Policy**

From a comparative perspective, what kinds of innovation strategies and policies should the government and enterprises employ to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship?

Moderator: Xuezhi LIU, Vice President of Chinese Academy of Personnel Science

Speakers:

- Zhen WANG, Vice President of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
- Per Jenster, Chairman of Nordic International Management Institute
- Alison Nankivell, Vice President, Venture Capital Action Plan, Business Development Bank of Canada

12:00-13:30 **Lunch**

13:30-15:00 **Panel Discussion 2: Factors Impeding Innovation and Countermeasures Implemented by Different Countries**

What are the barriers to innovation and entrepreneurship – government, financing, or human resources? What is the experience of relevant countries in this regard?

Moderator: Michael Miles, Director, MBA Program, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa

Speakers:

- Gilles Patry, President and CEO, Canada Foundation for Innovation
- Qingwei MENG, Vice President of China Association for Personnel Exchange
- Yaowu YANG, Director, Shanghai Institute of Science and Technology Policy
- Zhengyu HOU, President and Chairman, Bridge Human Resources Group
- Wenjian LIAO, Chairman, Bluesource Investment Group

15:00-15:10 **Break**

15:10-16:40 **Panel Discussion 3: Measures Building an Innovation Platform and Lessons from Experiences**

What can be learned while building innovation platforms such as high-tech industrial parks and sci-tech parks? What works and what doesn't?

Moderator: Kenny ZHANG, Senior Research Analyst, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Speakers:

- Liqin DONG, Associate Counsel of Qingdao Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, Vice President of China Association for Personnel Exchange
- Nicolai Peitersen, Senior EU Expert, EU China Partnership on Urbanization; Consultant to governments, international organizations and non-profit organizations
- Haishan TANG, Executive Deputy Secretary-General, China Auto Talents Society
- Ambarish Datta, Managing Director and CEO, BSE Institute Ltd.
- Ethan Sun, Founder and President of Istuary Innovation Group

November 14, 2014

08:30-10:00 **Panel Discussion 4: Implementing a More Open Talent Policy**

How can we introduce policies that will provide a sound environment and platform for attracting foreign innovative talent?

Moderator: Jing LI, Deputy Director-General of Overseas Students and Experts Services Center

Speakers:

- Christina Caron, Director, Economic Policy, Employment and Social Development Canada
- Guang CHEN, Professor and Dean of School of Public Administration, Southwest Jiaotong University
- Xiyou FAN, Deputy Director of the Innovation Promotion Department, Administration Commission of Shanghai Hi-tech Demonstration Zone

10:00-10:10 **Break**

10:10-11:30 **Panel Discussion 5: International Cooperation as an Impetus for Innovation and Development**

What are the possible types of international collaborations and partnerships that can be built to foster innovation and entrepreneurship?

Moderator: Eva Busza, Vice President Research and Programs, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Speakers:

- Yongle ZHAO, Director of the Center for Human Resources, Wentian College, Hohai University
- Manzoor Alam, Core Expert of the International Technical Assistance Team, China Europe Public Administration Project (Phase 2)
- Peter Geluk, Senior Advisor on Innovation Strategy, University of British Columbia

11:30-12:00 **Conclusion**

Moderator: Guang CHEN, Professor and Dean of School of Public Administration, Southwest Jiaotong University

Speakers:

- Eva Busza, Vice President Research and Programs, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada
- Xing'an YU, President, Chinese Academy of Personnel Science

12:10-13:30 **Lunch**

13:30-17:30 **Fieldtrip and Roundtable: Sino-German Cooperation for SMEs Park**

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3. **Gilles Patry**, President and CEO, Canada Foundation for Innovation
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5. **Alison Nankivell**, Vice President, Venture Capital Action Plan, Business Development Bank of Canada
6. **Christina Caron**, Director, Economic Policy, Employment and Social Development Canada
7. **Ethan Sun**, Founder and President of Istuary Innovation Group, Canada
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8. **Zhen WANG**, Vice President of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences
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