

University-Based Nonprofit Education in China

An Overview and Assessment

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Abstract

What are the extent, nature, and state of nonprofit education in Chinese universities? We address this question with the aim of providing the first overview and assessment of the university-based education programs in nonprofit management and philanthropic studies in China. Based on a 2012 survey among nonprofit faculty in the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences, we found nonprofit courses were offered at about two thirds of top Chinese universities, the curriculum was practice oriented with a heavy emphasis on nonprofit management, and more than 80% of the nonprofit education programs were placed in the professional school of public administration or public policy. Our findings indicate that nonprofit education in China is clearly intended to nurture professionals for the Chinese nonprofit sector, but its coverage, course design, and related research quality still have significant limitations. We further discuss the symptoms and implications of the limitations in China's nonprofit education and attribute some of the limitations to the strict regulation the Chinese government has imposed on the nonprofit sector.

Keywords: *nonprofit education; nonprofit research; nonprofit courses; Chinese universities; Chinese nonprofit sector*

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Over the past three decades, a “quiet revolution” has been taking place in China: the rise of the nonprofit and voluntary sector. From virtual nonexistence before the onset of economic reforms in the late 1970s, the sector has grown to nearly half a million officially registered nonprofit organizations in 2012 (Ministry of Civil Affairs, 2012), as well as numerous grassroots organizations that stay off the government’s radar. This fast growing nonprofit and voluntary sector in China serves not only as a response to a variety of public needs and demands, but also as a mechanism by which citizens inform and influence public policy (Guo & Zhang, 2013).

Along with the rapid growth of the Chinese nonprofit sector, research institutes and education programs have burgeoned across a number of universities. The NGO Research Center at Tsinghua University, the first of its kind in China, was founded in October 1998. The first nonprofit courses were offered at Tsinghua University and Yunnan University around the same time. The ever increasing number of institutes and programs strive to nurture nonprofit management professionals, conduct nonprofit research, and actively participate in boosting the development of the third sector in Chinese society.

What are the extent, nature, and state of nonprofit education in Chinese universities today? The aim of this article, following existing research on nonprofit education in other countries (Allison et al., 2007; Dolch, Ernst, McClusky, Mirabella, & Sadow, 2007; Mirabella, 2007; Mirabella & Wish, 2000), is to provide the first overview and assessment of nonprofit education in Chinese universities and examine its role in promoting the development of the nonprofit sector and shaping the civil society in China.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Next, we review the existing literature on nonprofit education and summarize the major findings from this research. We pay special attention to the methodologies used in previous studies. After this, we provide an introduction to the genesis and development of nonprofit education in China, with a focus on university-based education. We then discuss the data collection procedure that was used and the sample of universities in our study. Following this, we present the findings from our survey of nonprofit faculty in the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences. In light of a mutually reinforcing relationship between nonprofit academic programs and research institutes, we report survey results on education programs and research institutes. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our key findings for the future of nonprofit education in China.

Literature Review

The United States has been a forerunner in developing nonprofit academic programs in higher education. The number of university-based nonprofit academic programs has grown exponentially since the first cohort of such programs emerged in the early 1980s (Mirabella, 2007; Mirabella & Wish, 2000; Wish & Mirabella, 1998; Young, 1999). Among the major influencing factors for the initial growth of nonprofit education programs were the rapid growth of the U.S. nonprofit sector and the increasingly important role of nonprofit organizations in delivering public services in the second half the 20th century (Mirabella, 2007; O’Neill, 2007).

In view of the substantial increase in the number of graduate and undergraduate nonprofit management education programs in the United States, Mirabella and Wish (1999) mapped the extent and nature of graduate education in the early 1990s. Dolch

et al. (2007) identified four curricular models (i.e., certificate programs, academic minors, academic majors, and programs combining the previous three) used in undergraduate American humanics programs to teach nonprofit management around the same time. Mirabella and Wish (2000) compared the curricular elements of nonprofit management degree programs in schools of business, public administration, and social work across the United States. They found the “inside function” courses dominated the course offerings of the degree programs studied. To facilitate this line of work, Mirabella developed a national database on nonprofit management education in U.S. colleges and universities. A Web site was created to provide academic managers of nonprofit education programs with the capacity to update information of their programs online. With this national database, Dolch et al. (2007) updated and expanded their research on undergraduate education. Mirabella (2007) further documented the growth of nonprofit management education in American universities and colleges in 10 years from 1996 to 2006. She mapped the growth of the field during the 10 years by type of program: graduate (including PhD), undergraduate, continuing education, and noncredit. Allison et al. (2007) examined the state of nonprofit doctoral programs based on the data collected through surveys of faculty members and PhD students.

Although most of the published studies are U.S. focused, researchers have begun to examine the state of nonprofit education in other countries and regions. For example, Pospíšilová (2012) mapped the state and development of university-based nonprofit management education in the Czech Republic, a Central European postcommunist country. She identified more than 100 nonprofit sector-related courses and four programs with a concentration in nonprofit management education in the 2007–2008 academic year. The study also revealed an interesting tension between the supply and the demand for nonprofit management education: Although a civil society approach was taken in most of the academic programs, nonprofit leaders called for more of a managerial approach to nonprofit management education.

In the existing literature on the state of nonprofit education, various methods of data collection have been applied. Mirabella and Wish (2000), for example, collected their data through examining catalogs, Web sites, and electronic correspondence to deans and admissions officers from the top 10 schools in each category published in *U.S. News and World Report*, supplemented by focus group interviews and follow-up questionnaires with faculty, alumni, employers, and funders from 10 out of those top schools.

Allison et al. (2007) collected their data on nonprofit doctoral programs through surveys of faculty members and PhD students. In particular, the sample of faculty was drawn from the national database that Mirabella created. O’Neill (2007) based his discussion of the future of nonprofit management education on interviews with 20 leaders in the field.

Pospíšilová’s (2012) study of nonprofit management education in the Czech Republic first entailed three phases of data collection. Initially, Pospíšilová identified nonprofit courses offered at all public and private universities and colleges in Czech through a survey of study programs and course offerings at the Web sites of those universities and colleges. Next, she collected data through an e-mail survey of 90 instructors of the courses. She then conducted expert interviews and consultations with educators from the public universities and with leaders and educators from the potential

competitors (i.e., nonprofits through which management courses are also provided). Finally, she conducted a focus group with six nonprofit leaders on their expectations from the university-based nonprofit management programs.

In sum, most of the studies reviewed involved faculty surveys and/or interviews for data collection. In the United States, the existence of a national database has facilitated the collection of faculty survey and interview data by offering a comprehensive and reliable sampling frame. Yet the use of faculty surveys and interviews was a popular method for collecting data about nonprofit education even prior to the development of the national database.

Nonprofit Education in China: An Overview

In 2011, the China Philanthropy Research Institute at Beijing Normal University published a report on the status and prospect of nonprofit education in China. The report provided the first comprehensive map of the state of Chinese nonprofit education. Chinese nonprofit education was classified into two major categories: professional education and public education. Professional education was further divided into academic education and vocational education. Public education consisted of elite education and nonelite education. Notwithstanding its contribution, this categorization is limited in that its classification criterion is inconsistent. As an improvement, Lai (2011) proposed to categorize Chinese nonprofit education according to its target population. He divided Chinese nonprofit education into vocational education aimed at nonprofit practitioners, professional education targeted at university students, and public education oriented toward the general public.

The early development of Chinese nonprofit education was focused on vocational education in general and on education for nonprofit practitioners in organizational capacity building in particular. The development of vocational nonprofit education in China has undergone three stages. The first stage was the introduction, during which educators introduced foreign experiences in nonprofit capacity building and provided training for Chinese nonprofit leaders and managers accordingly. The most influential program during this stage was probably the Winrock Chinese NGO Capacity Building Program. Since the early 1990s, Winrock International has conducted a series of nonprofit leadership training programs funded by the Ford Foundation. In 2002, again funded by the Ford Foundation, Winrock implemented a 3-year NGO capacity building program for Chinese nonprofit organizations in the areas of strategic planning, governance, leadership, human resource management, and financial management (China Development Brief, 2013). The second stage was localization, during which many grassroots organizations developed localized paths of organizational capacity building. One representative example is the Guizhou Association for Community Construction and Rural Governance (2013), for which nonprofit capacity building fits the unique political, social, and resource environments in China. In the third stage, incubation, educators attempt to integrate governmental support, corporate venture capital, and charity foundations into the “incubator” programs to enable nonprofit organizational capacity building. One typical example is the Nonprofit Incubator (NPI) founded in January 2006 with headquarters in Shanghai. The NPI is a cluster of intermediary agencies to promote social innovation and cultivate social entrepreneurs by

granting crucial support to start-ups and small- to medium-sized NGOs and social enterprises. It has mobilized over USD \$40 million funding from government agencies, corporations, and charity foundations to support the philanthropic programs of grassroots nongovernmental organizations (NPI, 2013). The main organizations dedicated to vocational education for NGO capacity building in the past two decades are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Major Vocational Nonprofit Education Organizations in China

Organization	Founding year	Headquarters	Capacity building focuses
CANGO	1993	Beijing	Grassroots organization and migrant workers service organization capacity
ENJIU	1998	Beijing	Nonprofit professional staff development
Huizeren	2003	Beijing	Volunteer management
Beineng	2005	Beijing	Nonprofit learning network to provide training in 15 areas
Yinglu	2004	Shanghai	Leadership, resource mobilization, and management
NPI	2006	Shanghai	Incubators to provide comprehensive NGO capacity building training
ICS	2003	Guangzhou	Leadership

Note. Adapted from *The Basic Situation and Developmental Strategy of Chinese Nonprofit Education*, by W. Lai, 2011, and compiled by the authors of this article.

Professional nonprofit education is targeted at university students. Its mission is to nurture potential nonprofit professionals and nonprofit researchers. Unlike vocational nonprofit education with a focus on organizational capacity building, the goal of professional nonprofit education in China is to balance practical skills and theoretical foundations. Given its management nature, most of the professional nonprofit education programs are offered within the school of public administration or public policy setting and school of social work setting.

It is generally recognized that the founding of the NGO Research Center at the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University, in 1998 marks the beginning of professional nonprofit education in China. Subsequently, a number of nonprofit research and teaching institutions were established in top Chinese universities, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2*Major Professional Nonprofit Education and Research Institutions in China*

Institution and university	Founding year	Affiliated school	Main education activities
NGO Research Center, Tsinghua University	1998	School of Public Policy and Management	Nonprofit concentration within master's and doctoral programs
The Center for NPOs Law, Peking University	1998	Law School	Nonprofit courses for undergraduates and graduates
Center of Philanthropy, Sun Yat-sen University	2003	School of Sociology and Anthropology	General education nonprofit courses
Center for Civil Society Studies, Peking University	2005	School of Government	Nonprofit concentration within master's and doctoral programs
NPO Research Center, Renmin University of China	2005	School of Public Administration	Comprehensive nonprofit curriculum and nonprofit concentration within MPA program
Center for the Third Sector, Shanghai Jiao Tong University	2006	School of International and Public Affairs	Nonprofit concentration within master and doctoral programs
Institute for Civil Society Development, Zhejiang University	2006	College of Public Administration	Nonprofit concentration within master's and doctoral programs
Research Center of Philanthropy and Social Enterprise, Beijing Normal University	2007	School of Social Development and Public Policy	First nonprofit master's program and first nonprofit doctoral program

Note. Adapted from *The Basic Situation and Developmental Strategy of Chinese Nonprofit Education*, by W. Lai, 2011, and compiled by the authors of this article.

Professional nonprofit education in Chinese universities is also offered in the social work setting. Through funding from the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Peking University offered the first social work major in China in 1988. Following 20 years of economic transition and social transformation in China, the need for a large number of social work professionals emerged, which greatly boosted the rapid development of social work education in Chinese universities. The Chinese government targeted educating 2 million social work professionals by 2015 and 3 million by 2020. Correspondingly, by late 2010, 253 Chinese universities had offered social work majors with a total enrollment of 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students. In 2010, 33 Chinese universities launched master's of social work (MSW) programs. In 2011, the MSW programs were expanded to 58 universities. Because of the natural connection of social work to the nonprofit field, hundreds and thousands of nonprofit professionals have been trained in social work education in Chinese universities.

The aim of public nonprofit education is to promote nonprofit and philanthropic consciousness, values, and behaviors among the general public. Because it is not closely related with the research purpose of this article, we skip this part in our description and analysis.

Method

We examined the extent, nature, and state of nonprofit education in Chinese universities, namely, professional nonprofit education in China. We collected our data by conducting a survey in 2012 among nonprofit faculty in the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences.¹ This approach is justified for three reasons. First, we followed the data collection methods in existing studies. Second, as shown in the following sections, nonprofit management education in Chinese universities was mostly initiated by nonprofit scholars; therefore, it seems reasonable to expect the nonprofit faculty to be most informed about the state of nonprofit education in their own institutions. Third, the university-based nonprofit education in China is still at its burgeoning stage. Some nonprofit course offerings were not included in university catalogs. As a result, university or school administrators may not be the most accessible and reliable sources for data collection. Meanwhile, the reputational approach to mapping the state of nonprofit education by focusing on the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences is also supported in previous studies (Light, 1999; Mirabella & Wish, 2000). Indeed, the most updated state and trends of nonprofit education tend to show up in the top Chinese universities.

Because nonprofit course offerings in Chinese universities are mostly initiated by nonprofit scholars and researchers, nonprofit education is inextricably interwoven with nonprofit research. In the survey, therefore, we asked the following questions about nonprofit education and nonprofit research in Chinese universities: (1) the number of nonprofit courses offered, (2) the starting year of such offering, (3) course titles and content, (4) whether or not nonprofit is a concentration in graduate programs, (5) the main reason to launch nonprofit courses, (6) the department or school offering those courses, (7) whether or not nonprofit research institutions have been established in

¹Wu Shulian 2012 Chinese Top 100 Universities in Humanities and Social Sciences. Retrieved on September 10, 2014, from <http://edu.people.com.cn/n/2013/0117/c1053-20237677.html>

that university, (8) the major research areas for the institutions, (9) the sources of research funding, and (10) the biggest barrier to conducting nonprofit research in China.

The survey went through three steps. The first was to identify the respondents. Similar to the approach adopted by Pospíšilová (2012), we chose the scholar in a university with the most nonprofit publications in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), the most comprehensive database of Chinese academic journal publications, as the survey respondent for nonprofit education in that university. We assumed that such a scholar would be equipped with the best knowledge about the state of nonprofit education and research in that university. The second step was to send the survey to the identified scholar by e-mail. If no response after two attempts, we then e-mailed the scholar with the second most nonprofit publications at the same university. If still unsuccessful, the third step was to find relevant scholars on the university Web site or ask other scholars to recommend someone and then follow up with our e-mail survey. The survey yielded 81 responses, which amounts to an 81% response rate.

Survey Findings

Findings on Nonprofit Education

Our survey results show that among the 81 universities that responded, 53 offered nonprofit courses. In other words, 65.4% of Chinese top universities in humanities and social sciences offered nonprofit education for students in 2012. Table 3 shows the distribution of the number of Chinese universities by the starting year of nonprofit course offerings between 1998 and 2012.

Table 3

Distribution of Universities by Year of Starting Nonprofit Courses, 1998–2012

Year	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
Number	1	1	1	3	1	4	5	13	7	4	2	1	6	3	1
%	1.9	1.9	1.9	5.7	1.9	7.5	9.4	24.5	13.2	7.5	3.8	1.9	11.3	5.7	1.9

As shown in Table 3, the number of Chinese universities offering nonprofit courses had increased significantly since 2003. In 2005, the number reached a peak: 13 universities launched nonprofit education in this year. Basically, 54.7% of the universities started nonprofit education between 2003 and 2007. After 2007, the tide of nonprofit course offerings started to ebb, except for 2010, during which six universities initiated nonprofit education.

In general, the number of nonprofit courses offered by Chinese universities was still relatively low as of 2012. The 53 universities offered in total 153 nonprofit courses. On average, each Chinese university offered 2.89 nonprofit courses. More specifically, 17 universities (32% of 53 universities) were associated only with one course offering, 19 universities (35.8%) with two courses, five universities (9.4%) with three courses, five universities (9.4%) with four courses, and three universities (5.7%) with five courses.

The course content of nonprofit education in Chinese universities is mainly practice oriented. Of the 153 nonprofit courses offered by the universities responding to our survey, 47 (30.7%) were Nonprofit Organization Management or Nongovernmental Organization Management.² In other words, almost all of the 53 Chinese universities offered one course on the general management of nonprofit organizations. Seventeen courses (11.1% of 153 courses) were introductory, such as Introduction to Nonprofit Organizations, Introduction to Nongovernment Organizations, or Introduction to the Third Sector or Introduction to Civil Society. Six courses (3.9% of 153) were Nonprofit Organization Marketing. The findings demonstrate that university-based nonprofit education in China has a strong orientation toward the nurturing of nonprofit professionals because its course content is heavily focused on nonprofit management matters.

Nonprofit education in Chinese universities is primarily targeted at undergraduate students. Among the 53 universities reporting nonprofit course offerings, 48 (90.5%) offered nonprofit courses as electives for undergraduate students. Three universities (5.7%) offered nonprofit courses only in graduate programs. Twenty-two universities (41.5%) offered courses at undergraduate and graduate levels. In total, 25 universities (47.1%) offered graduate-level nonprofit courses. Nevertheless, only 18 universities (34%) offered nonprofit and philanthropic studies as a concentration area in an existing graduate program.

The findings also show that nonprofit scholars are arguably the most important driving force for nonprofit education in Chinese universities. Thirty-six universities (67.9% of 53 universities) reported that the offering of nonprofit courses was advocated and promoted by the nonprofit scholars at that university. In another 14 universities (26.4%), the introduction of nonprofit education was decided by the university administration or the leadership at school or program level.

Most of the Chinese nonprofit education programs were housed in a public administration or public policy school. Forty-three out of 53 (81.1%) Chinese universities reported offering nonprofit courses in the School of Public Administration/Public Policy/Public Affairs/Government. Eight universities (15.1%) had nonprofit education offered in the School or Department of Social Work/Sociology/Humanities and Social Sciences. Six universities (11.3%) offered nonprofit education in business school settings.³

Findings on Nonprofit Research

To gain a richer understanding of nonprofit education in Chinese universities, we also asked in our survey about the state of nonprofit research in their universities. As of 2012, 15 research institutes or centers on nonprofit and philanthropic studies had been set up among 13 universities (24.5% of 53 universities). Table 4 shows the distribution of nonprofit research institutions by their founding year.

² Some universities offer two courses on nonprofit organization management, one for the undergraduate program and the other for the graduate program. In such a case, we counted them as two courses.

³ The choices of settings are not mutually exclusive; some universities reported nonprofit course offerings in multiple settings simultaneously.

Table 4

Distribution of Nonprofit Research Institutions by Founding Year, 1998–2012

Year	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
Number	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	2	1	2	1	1
%	13.3	0	0	0	0	6.7	0	6.7	6.7	23.1	13.3	6.7	13.3	6.7	6.7

Similar to the distribution pattern of nonprofit course offerings presented in Figure 1, most of the Chinese universities established nonprofit research institutions between 2003 and 2008. Of the 15 research institutions, 59.6% were founded during this period. There were 93 full-time research staff members in the 15 research entities, with each entity having about six researchers on average.

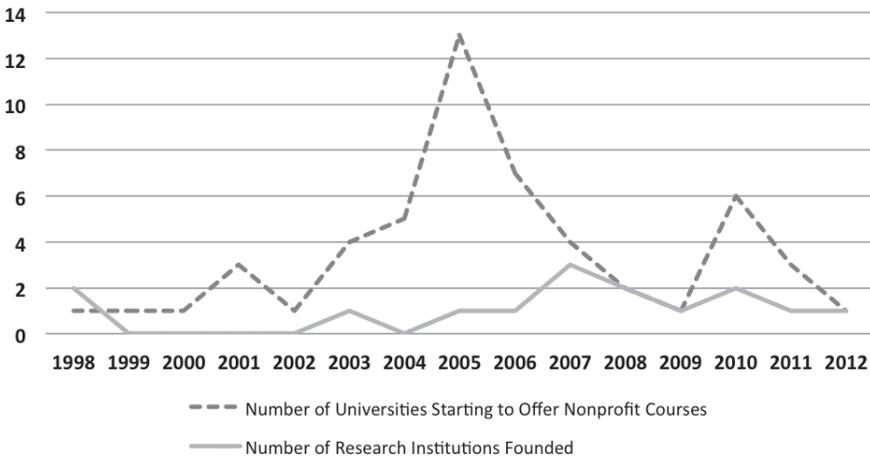


Figure 1. Nonprofit education and research in Chinese universities.

Among the 15 nonprofit research institutions, the research focuses were diverse. The most popular research area was to examine the role of nonprofit organizations in social management. Eleven out of 15 institutions had at least one research focus on this subject. A concept heavily emphasized in the Chinese government, social management in the Chinese context means that nonprofit organizations help government officials address social problems through coordinating social relations and regulating social behaviors. It is in effect part of social control by the government. Relatedly, 10 institutions had a research area on the role of nonprofit organizations in social service provision. The distribution of research areas of the 15 institutions is displayed in Figure 2.

The research funding of the 15 institutions came from universities’ research funding, commissioned research project funding from the government, commissioned research funding from nonprofit organizations, and foundation funding. Ten institutions reported receiving university research funding, nine reported receiving funding from the government, 10 from nonprofit organizations, and 10 from foundations.

As a further investigation, we also asked our respondents to identify the main barriers to conducting nonprofit research in China. Only 46 respondents answered this question. Forty respondents (87% of 46) reported that the insufficiency of professional and specialized nonprofit researchers was a major obstacle to nonprofit research in China. Thirty-seven respondents viewed the lack of localized theories for Chinese nonprofit organizations as another key impediment. Figure 3 shows the distribution of crucial research barriers as reported by the 46 respondents.

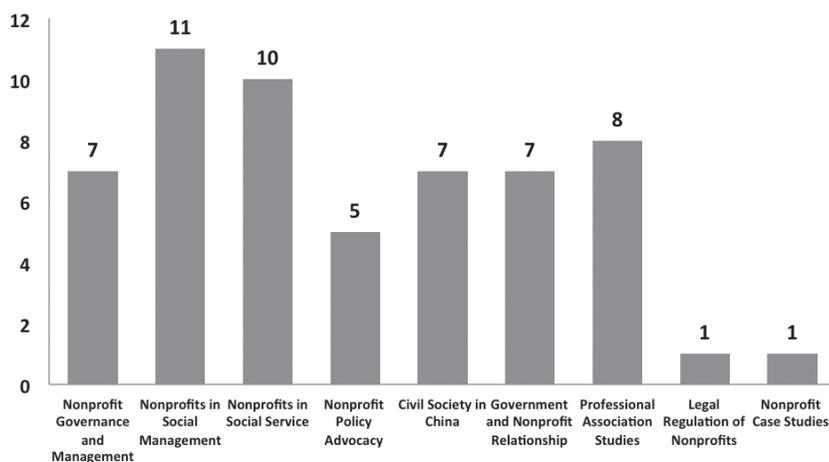


Figure 2. The distribution of research focuses by institution.

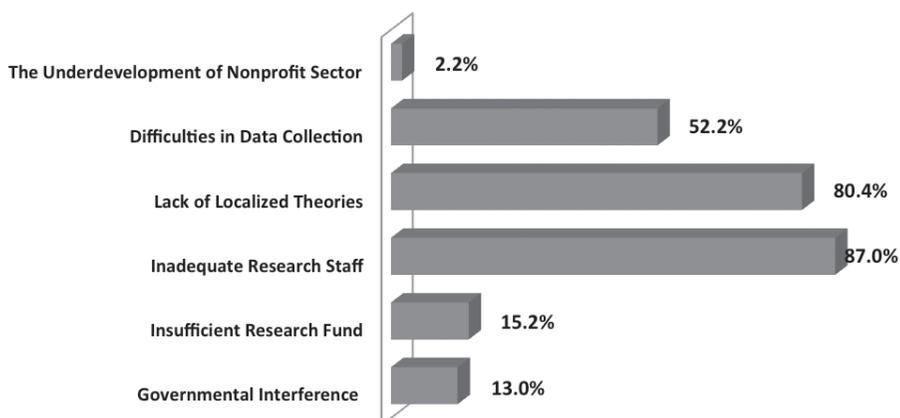


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who reported the main barriers to nonprofit research in China.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this article, we examined the extent, nature, and state of university-based nonprofit education in China through a survey of nonprofit faculty in the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences. Several interesting findings emerged from our survey data. First, the nonprofit courses offered in the studied universities are primarily targeted at undergraduate students rather than graduate students. Second, most of these courses are offered in a school of public administration, public policy, public affairs, or government. This strong affiliation of nonprofit education with public administration and policy programs echoes O'Neill's (2007) prediction that although different approaches to nonprofit management education continue to coexist, the dominant model—programs based in public administration and policy—remains unchanged. Third, the curriculum of university-based nonprofit education in China has been practice oriented since the beginning of the movement. This is consistent with findings in other countries (Mirabella & Wish, 2000; Pospíšilová, 2012), indicating that the fast growth of the nonprofit sector and strong demand from nonprofit practitioners provide the impetus for the early development of nonprofit education programs, regardless of country and culture. Nevertheless, nonprofit scholars are keeping an eye on developing nonprofit theories within the Chinese context because, as our findings indicate, a number of scholars have recognized the lack of localized theories as a major barrier to future nonprofit research in China.

More broadly, our research indicates that the development of nonprofit education in Chinese universities is concomitant of the rise of the Chinese nonprofit sector. As shown in Figure 4, the developmental trajectories of Chinese nonprofit organizations, nonprofit research (measured by the number of journal articles published annually), and nonprofit education programs had demonstrated similar patterns. Chinese nonprofit organizations had witnessed a rapid and steady growing trend in terms of the number of registered organizations since the late 1990s or early 2000s. From 1991 to 2012, the average annual growth rate of the registered number of nonprofit organizations was 8.5%. Over the 1990s alone, the growth rate was 6.3%. However, during 2001–2007, the growth rate increased to 9.1%. From 2008–2012, the growth rate dropped to only 4.2%. As Figure 4 shows, 2007 was a turning point for the development of nonprofit organizations in China. The years between 2001 and 2007 were the golden age for Chinese nonprofits as they experienced the fastest development. Correspondingly, nonprofit education and nonprofit research recorded significant growth during the same period. For Chinese nonprofit research, according to Zhang and Guo (2013), the number of nonprofit articles published before 2000 accounted for only 1.7% of nonprofit publications from 1994–2011. Starting from the early 21st century, Chinese nonprofit publications exploded with a remarkable annual growth rate of 37.6% between 2001 and 2007. Chinese nonprofit journal article publications during this period accounted for 52.3% of publications. The year 2007 was also a point of change for Chinese nonprofit research: Nonprofit publications decreased dramatically from 112 articles in 2007 to only 35 articles in 2008, a fall of 68.8%. Similarly, nonprofit course offerings and research institutions in Chinese universities experienced a rapid growth between 2001 and 2007. Over the 15 years of nonprofit education in Chinese universities from 1998 to 2012, 69.8% of universities started nonprofit course offerings

between 2001 and 2007. Meanwhile, 46.2% nonprofit research institutions in Chinese universities were established in this period, too. The synchronous development of nonprofit sector growth, nonprofit research, and nonprofit education indicates that the advancement of Chinese nonprofit education is probably driven by the developmental demands of nonprofit organizations in China.

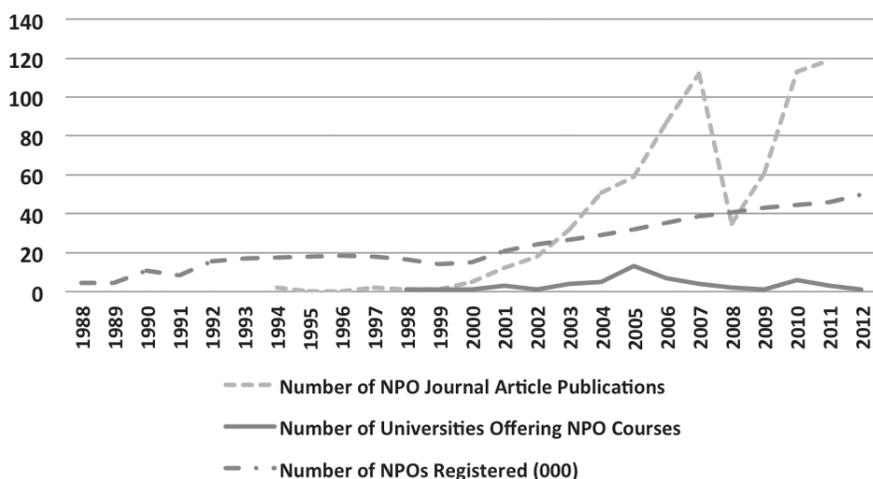


Figure 4. The growth of the nonprofit sector and the development of nonprofit education and research in China.

The development of nonprofit education in Chinese universities thus shows a demand-driven and scholar-led pattern. In other words, the pushing from nonprofit organizations (demand) and the pulling by nonprofit scholars (supply) are perhaps the fundamental forces underlying the development of nonprofit education in China. On the demand side, there has been a strong demand among Chinese nonprofit organizations for education and training on capacity building, and such a demand has been increasing over time. As discussed earlier in the article, Chinese nonprofit education started from vocational education to meet the demands of nonprofit organizations, particularly in capacity building. Back in the early 1990s when no nonprofit courses or research institutions in Chinese universities were available, many international nonprofit organizations such as Winrock launched education programs to foster the development of Chinese nonprofit organizations.

On the supply side, Chinese nonprofit scholars have taken a proactive role in responding to the developmental demands of nonprofit organizations in China. Our research findings indicate that nonprofit course offerings in a majority of Chinese universities were initiated and advocated by nonprofit scholars. For the rest of the universities in which the course offerings were granted by the university administration or the school or department leadership, the decision also benefited greatly from the pushes and influences of nonprofit scholars. With a sense of mission, nonprofit scholars have pushed forward university-based nonprofit education to meet the strong and growing demand from the nonprofit sector.

Despite these pushing and pulling forces, there is a clear indication from our research findings that university-based nonprofit education in China is plagued with limitations and challenges. First of all, the overall coverage of nonprofit education in Chinese universities is still low. Although 53 universities in our sample reported offering nonprofit courses, they account for only 6.3% of the population of Chinese universities.⁴ Our sample included the top 100 Chinese universities in humanities and social sciences. Given their reputation and resource endowments, these universities are arguably more prone to offering nonprofit education. To validate this judgment, we contacted scholars or checked the Web sites of 47 other Project 211 universities⁵ that are not among the top 100 universities in humanities and social sciences. We found only three universities offering nonprofit courses. The low-level coverage of nonprofit education in Chinese universities is reflected not only in the low prevalence of universities with nonprofit course offerings, but also by the low number of nonprofit courses offered. On average, each of the 53 universities with nonprofit course offerings offered fewer than three nonprofit courses. In conclusion, the development of nonprofit education in Chinese universities is still in its embryonic stage and far from enough in terms of nurturing nonprofit professionals to meet the demands of the Chinese nonprofit sector.

Second, nonprofit education in Chinese universities suffers a “disconnect” between its original intent and actual implementation. In terms of course content, more than one third of the nonprofit courses were focused on nonprofit management. In other words, nonprofit education in Chinese universities is practice oriented toward management education. It is therefore not surprising that 81.1% of universities house their nonprofit education programs in a professional school of public administration or public policy. Yet only 34% of Chinese universities in our research reported having adopted nonprofit and philanthropic studies as a concentration for their graduate programs and only one university launched a nonprofit master’s degree program. Although the intent of curricular content design is to put a heavy emphasis on management and to nurture nonprofit professionals, nonprofit courses are offered mainly at the undergraduate level as electives, contradicting the original intent. Many nonprofit professionals-to-be enrolled in master of public administration (MPA) or master of public policy (MPP) programs are not able to receive comprehensive and systematic nonprofit education.

Third, the disconnect in Chinese nonprofit education can be largely attributed to the strict regulation the government imposes on nonprofit academic degrees and disciplines in particular and nonprofit development in general. According to the current *Catalog of Academic Degrees and Disciplines* jointly publicized by the China Academic Degrees Commission and Ministry of Education in 2011, nonprofit and philanthropic studies are not officially recognized as an academic discipline. Consequently, no academic degrees, especially professional master’s degrees in nonprofit or philanthropy, are approved by the Ministry of Education. This is why nonprofit course offerings in Chinese universities are primarily promoted by nonprofit scholars rather than in-

⁴By May 2012, China had 841 universities offering bachelor’s degree programs and above.

⁵Project 211 is a project of National Key Universities and colleges launched in 1995 by the Ministry of Education, China, with the intent to build up 100 key universities and colleges in the 21st century with high-level research standards. By March 2011, China had 112 universities and colleges participating in Project 211. Project 211 universities take on the responsibility of training four fifths of doctoral students, two thirds of graduate students, half of students from abroad, and one third of undergraduates. They offer 85% of the state’s key subjects, hold 96% of the state’s key laboratories, and use 70% of scientific research funding.

roduced by the educational authorities such as in the case of social work. Without an official status, nonprofit education in Chinese universities can only be offered as electives for undergraduates as part of the general education requirement. Moreover, as many scholars have pointed out (Guo & Zhang, 2013; Zhang & Guo, 2012), the Chinese government generally regards the development of nonprofit sector as a threat to its authoritarian rule. It welcomes only service organizations. Reflected in university education, the Chinese government has encouraged the development of social work, but it has been more reluctant to advance nonprofit education. The government even tightened its control over nonprofit organizations after 2007, which in part explains the relatively lower annual growth rate of nonprofit organizations registered in the following years. Despite the rapid growth of the nonprofit sector in China during the past three decades, other important aspects of the development of Chinese nonprofits (e.g., organization type, service variety, and geographic coverage) are still limited because of the government's strict regulation. Relatedly, the demand for nonprofit education has been restrained and the design of nonprofit course offerings has somehow been distorted. One of our survey respondents noted in an open-ended response,

I personally believe that the underdevelopment of nonprofit education in China can be fundamentally attributed to the weak development of nonprofit sector due to adverse political and institutional environment. Because of its weakness, the nonprofit sector plays a very limited role in the Chinese society. Thus its demands for education and training are largely neglected by the government and the society. Correspondingly, Chinese universities have no incentives to launch nonprofit education programs.

Finally, the Chinese government is a barrier to developing university-based nonprofit education in China, but other important challenges include the shortage of quality nonprofit faculty and the prematurity of nonprofit research. Our survey findings demonstrate that lack of faculty with specialized nonprofit training and deficiency of localized nonprofit theories have seriously impeded the progress of nonprofit education and research in Chinese universities. Because nonprofit education in Chinese universities is mostly led and promoted by nonprofit scholars, a critical mass of well-trained scholars equipped with general and contextual knowledge will be instrumental to further developing nonprofit education in China.

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