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**The Research Grants Council of Hong Kong
Prestigious Fellowship Scheme under the Humanities and Social Sciences Panel
Completion Report**

(for completed projects only)

Part A: Project and Award Holder

1. Project Title

“Can Reverse Migration Change Institutions? “

2. Award Holder and Academic Department/Unit Involved

Name/Post	Unit/Department/Institution	Contact Information
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Part B: The Report

5. Workplan

5.1 Workplan as per original application

Should I be fortunate enough to receive the fellowship, I will utilize the entire year to complete this manuscript. As I am currently holding a GRF-RGC fellowship on US-China energy competition, which expires in August 2013, in the first half of 2013 I will travel to my research sites, complete the research and write up the results. Also, due to a very heavy teaching and administrative load this semester—at the request of the Head of my division, I taught an additional class because one colleague took medical leave—I have spent less time than I preferred on my book on returnees. Still, with the help of an RA, I am completing the empirical analysis of my existing data bases.

Therefore, in fall 2013, I will first interview holders of the 1000 Talents Award who reside in Hong Kong to heighten my awareness, clarify my questions and discover why they have not returned fulltime. I will also travel to Canada to interview recipients of this award who currently remain abroad. Then throughout the year, I will travel into the Mainland to interview people who have returned and visit some institutions that have carried out significant institutional innovations. In the spring, I will make one trip to the US as well. Finally, throughout the period of the award, I will continue to write up the manuscript while I am not travelling.

My plan is to finish the manuscript in spring 2014 and submit the manuscript to a major university press.

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5.3 Realisation of the workplan

(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the work as stated in the workplan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Although this is the final report for my Prestigious Fellowship Award, I must report that I have not completed my manuscript. Let me explain why, what I did accomplish during the time of the fellowship and since then, and where the book stands today.

Since much of my earlier analysis was based on surveys in 2002, 2004 and 2006-07, (and an on-line survey by my colleague Wang Huiyao in 2011, for which I have the data), I felt that I needed to have new data to keep the manuscript relevant. During 2014, and after I submitted the project extension request, I began to build a new data set, comprising the CVs of 1,430 awardees under three national programs for attracting returnees, and in 2015, added the CVs of 150 Mainlanders, working at the world's top universities, to the data set. Collecting the data involved an immense amount of coordination: finding the names of participants, finding their CVs online, and then coding the impact factor of each person's publications in order to measure and compare the quality of research of different categories of returnees. While some of that analysis is done, I have not incorporated the findings into the three chapters on academics, on scientists, and on mainland researchers in the Diaspora.

I also need to update the chapter on entrepreneurs in order to increase the likelihood that the book will be accepted at a top university press (as promised to the RGC). Much of the data are from a survey I carried out in 2004, and I have supplemented that data using the survey carried out by Wang in 2011. However, I am hoping to carry out a series of face-to face interviews in China with recent returned entrepreneurs to see if the findings of 2004 and 2011 still reflect the viewpoints of returning entrepreneurs in terms of the role of technology in attracting them back to China. I also did approximately 25 interviews in India in 2014 with returned Indian entrepreneurs, and may use those interviews to write a short section comparing Indian and Chinese returned entrepreneurs and the local environment which they face.

Also, while much of my initial analysis focused on explaining why people were returning in the first decade of the millennium, and the impact that returnees were having on the domestic scientific and academic culture, which was the underlying theme of this proposal, I have added an additional policy focus on explaining why, despite improvements in China's economy and scientific infrastructure, the best are still not returning. Thus, I recently completed a paper about the resistance to academic and scientific reform among vested interests in China's research community and how those interests are undermining the flow of top talent from abroad. This paper is based on the data set of 1,430 returnees, as well as an additional data set on the impact of university presidents, and their overseas experiences, on university reform and on the flow of high quality returnees into their school. The data actually show that universities, whose president received an overseas PhD, recruit significantly more high quality returnees than universities whose president had only been a visiting scholar overseas or who had never studied or worked abroad. I am currently improving the data analysis and will be sending the paper out for review. I attach a copy of the said paper, "*The best are yet to come: State programs, domestic resistance and reverse migration of high-level talent to China*" for your information. (Appendix A)

I also was distracted by the build-up to Occupy Central, as I was requested in December 2013—soon after the fellowship began—to do research on Occupy Central by a think tank in the Guangdong Provincial Government. To do that report, I spent time in spring 2014, interviewing all the major players in the politics surrounding the build-up to the Umbrella Movement of September-November 2014. Rightly or wrongly—in

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terms of the fellowship—I decided that the opportunity to write an independent report for a provincial government that plays an important role in Beijing’s viewpoint on Hong Kong politics—a report which might influence how leaders in Beijing would understand events in Hong Kong—was just too good to turn down. Another reason for not completing the manuscript is that, over the past two years, after I ended my fellowship period, I was very busy completing two Mass Online Open Classes (MOOCs), both on aspects of Chinese politics. This work was very time consuming. Both HKUST’s provost and my dean asked me to do this, and I hesitated to say no.

Work Completed during the time of the Fellowship

One reason for not completing the book is that in the fall of 2013, during the time I held the fellowship, I participated in a conference on migration at National University of Singapore, where I presented the chapter on policy making. The organizers of that conference urged me to revise my paper so it could be included in a special issue they were doing on migration (based on the conference papers) for the journal, *Geoforum*. But despite investing an enormous amount of time in the fall of 2013 revising it twice according to the reviewer’s comments, the journal eventually turned it down. Fortunately, I was able to present it at a conference at the University of Pennsylvania in spring 2015 and it will be forthcoming as a chapter in an edited book about China going global, published by the Brookings Institution. The paper is by the title “*Leaders, Bureaucrats and Institutional Culture: The Struggle over Bringing Back China’s Top Overseas Talent*,” and I included it as Appendix B.

During the fellowship, I reanalyzed data from my 2004 survey on entrepreneurs and revised a conference paper for a workshop organized by the president of the International Studies Association. The paper was on the struggle between Western norms and the dominant norms in China’s business culture, which was accepted for publication in the *International Studies Review*. My coauthor is a former MPhil student at HKUST who is now in the PhD program at UCLA. That paper will be incorporated into the chapter in my book on the impact of returnees on institutional norms in China, which was the overall theme of the Prestigious Fellowship.

In the spring of 2014, I traveled to the Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SHUFE), and spent a week interviewing faculty and administrators about the various educational reforms they were carrying out, all of which related directly to the fellowship’s theme of how returnees affect institutions in China. This school is particularly interesting (and relevant to my research), as they have a part-time dean, who holds positions in both the US and China, and a “dual track” hiring system, whereby they maintain the old system but also introduced a full-fledged, Western style tenure system. This research will be incorporated into the chapter on Returned Academics (I also followed up on those interviews in 2015, with visits to Beihang University—formerly known as Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics—and the Southwest University of Finance and Economics—SWUFE—to interview on the same topic. Both have special reform programs for returnees. All of this research will go into the chapter on academics, which will make it much more up-to-date. In both places I also gave lectures about the problems of China’s research culture.)

In spring 2014, I also traveled to India, to interview returned entrepreneurs, to give me a comparative framework for understanding China’s experience. The results of those 25 interviews will be used in the chapter on Returnees in Comparative Perspective.

Finally, during the year of the fellowship, I wrote a long section of my chapter, “*Returning to get a Job: Are Chinese “Sea Turtles” Becoming “Seaweed?”*” (Appendix C) I felt that to understand the problems faced by returned students in finding jobs back in China, I needed to better understand the quality of the education they were getting overseas. Hence, I invested time in this chapter, which is the one case study that I have completed.

I truly regret that I have not remained totally focused on completing the manuscript, but as I have described, I have continued to create new data sets that relate directly to the book and spun off papers on dominant themes in the book. In some ways it may be fortuitous that I did not finish the book, as policy on returnees, and the climate in China which may affect the decision on returning, is undergoing a change under Xi Jinping. Greater stress is being placed on those who have returned, rather than recruiting new returnees. Xi has decided to strengthen the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and returnees by turning

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the Western Returnees Students Association into a mass organization, led by the CCP, and by encouraging returnees to join it.

I realize I must finish the book, not just because I promised the RGC that I would do so, and received major funding to do so, but also because much of my academic identity and current reputation as a scholar are wrapped up in my work on returnees. I have revised most of the theory chapter of the book and have been working on the policy chapter and I include the theory chapter with this report, as well as an *Outline of the book*. (Appendix D)

6. Dissemination plan

6.3 Realisation of the dissemination plan

(maximum 2 pages; please state how and to what extent the output as stated in the dissemination plan has been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

Although I have not yet completed the manuscript, I have published several papers that will be incorporated into the book, and have given talks on the research in various venues. The two current publications are:

1. A paper, "Leaders, Bureaucrats and Institutional Culture: The Struggle over Bringing Back China's Top Overseas Talent," was presented at a conference on "China in a Changing World," Center for the Study of Contemporary China, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, April 30-May 1, 2015. It will be forthcoming in Avery Goldstein and Jacques del'Isle, eds., entitled *China's Global Engagement* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press). (Appendix B)
2. A study comparing the business norms of returnees and locals was published as, "Overseas Students, Returnees and the Diffusion of International Norms into Post-Mao China," *International Studies Review*, 16 (Fall 2014): 252-63. (Appendix E)

7. Other impact (e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, knowledge transfer, etc.)

Seminars and presentations during and after the Fellowship related to this research topic:

1. "Can China Bring Back the Best? The Chinese Communist Party's Role in the Search for Talent," Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India, 12 March, 2014.
2. Key Note Speaker, "China's Reverse Migration: Towards a Theory of Shortage," Chinese Students Abroad: Reflections, Strategies and Impacts of a Global Generation, Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark, 27-28 March 2014.

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3. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Metropolis Conference, Beijing, 14 April 2015.
4. "Technology and the Opportunities of Reverse Migration in Emerging Market Societies," presented to the Business Roundtable, Institute for Emerging Market Studies, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong Club, 24 April 2014.
5. "Presidential 'Pull' and Brain Circulation in China," presented at conference on China in the Global Academic Landscapes, Herrenhausen Symposium, Herrenhausen Palace, Hanover, Germany, 12 December 2014.
6. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Beijing Aeronautical and Aerospace University, Beijing, 22 April 2015.
7. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Organization Department, Beijing Municipality, Chinese Communist Party, Beijing, 22 October 2015.
8. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Development Research Institute, Southwest University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu, Sichuan, 24 September 2015.
9. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," York Centre on Asian Research (YCAR), York University, 22 July 2015.
10. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Beijing Aeronautical and Aerospace University, Beijing.
11. "State Programs and Reverse Migration of High-Level Talent to China: The Limits to Success," Beykent University, Istanbul, Turkey, 29 May 2015.
12. "China's National Programs to Promote a Reverse Brain Drain," Department of International Cooperation, The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK), Ankara, Turkey, 3 June 2015.

Finally, I am highly motivated to finish the book, as, excluding interviews with recent returned entrepreneurs, I have enough data to finish the manuscript and feel confident that it will be viewed as up-to-date. I only have to teach one course next semester, and have now set aside my time to finish the book. Any invitations to speak must be based on revising chapters in the book. For example, I will be attending a conference in New Delhi, India, in early December, where I will present the findings from my survey in India. Therefore, my goal is to complete a draft by next summer.