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Mapping knowledge production and scholarly communication in China
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Preface

In 2004, I went to Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR), the University of Amsterdam (UvA), as a visiting scholar with a scholarship from the China Scholarship Council (CSC). Professor Loet Leydesdorff worked as my academic advisor. It was my first time living outside of China. I had to adapt to a completely new environment, which was a very big challenge for a person who had been used to Chinese lifestyle. It seemed that the life in Amsterdam was completely not as what I expected. Several days after my arrival, I had already started to count down how many days left for my staying in Amsterdam. It is not exaggerative at all to say passing one day like passing one year for me. I even intended to return to China immediately. It was Loet and his wife Margaret who helped me pass the difficulties.

Before coming to ASCoR, I only had experience in data cleaning for the China Scientific and Technical Papers and Citation Database (CSTPCD) and basic education background for writing Chinese papers. My experience in writing research articles in English is empty. I still remember how my first international publication which was coauthored with Loet came out: it had been commented and revised by Loet for about ten rounds. I don’t know how Loet felt when he saw how terrible my first draft was. But I know how much time and painstaking effort he had contributed to my progress. In my later studies, whenever needed, Loet always provides timely advice and comments which broaden my view and lighten my thoughts. The process of solving questions raised by Loet is neither easy nor funny at all, sometimes, is a painful experience. But when I finally reach the target, great happiness and increased confidence are the best compensation.

In addition to helping raise my academic proficiency, Loet also supported me to applying scholarships. We applied two scholarships in 2005: Marie Curie Incoming International Fellowships (IIF) from the EU’s FP6 and a scholarship from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, KNAW). We passed the first round of evaluation for the IIF but failed in the second round because of lacking some application skills. But we won the KANW scholarship which could support me studying at ASCoR as a PhD student for two years. It was a pity that the KANW scholarship was given up since I decided to stay in China instead of going back to Amsterdam for the next two years’ study. While the scholarship only covers cost for studying in Amsterdam.

I am very grateful for Loet in helping achieve academic progress and for his wife Margaret in helping me adjust to the life in Amsterdam.

Deep thanks to Professor Wolfgang Glänzel who is also my promoter. The opportunity of working at the Steunpunt O&O Indicatoren (SOOI), Catholic University of Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, in abbreviation KULeuven), improves my expertise a lot. As the director of the SOOI, Professor Glänzel frees me from routine work so that I can focus on my PhD study. His PhD course entitled “Bibliometrics as a Research Filed” helps me understand bibliometrics theoretically, historically, and critically. Whenever needed, his help is always available. Through his practical action, professor Glänzel presents a good model as a devoted researcher.
From him, I learn not only academic knowledge, but also the way of being a good researcher.

My special thanks to Professor Stuart Blume for kindly accepting as my PhD promoter. Without his help, I could not have the chance of being a PhD student of the University of Amsterdam.

Thank Professor Wu Yishan, the chief engineer of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of China (ISTIC). Whenever I meet problems or puzzles about China, Professor Wu would be the first one to be consulted, and his help would always be on time.

Great thanks to my colleagues Bart Tijs and Wouter Jeuris. Both helped me in translating the summary of this dissertation into Dutch. In addition, Bart provides a lot of help in data processing.

The ASCoR research & PhD program managers Dr. Sandra Zwier and Dr. Maaike Prangsma have offered me a lot of help. Here I express my thanks to both of them.

Finally, I’d like to convey sorry to my dearest daughter for not being able to stay with her as long as we wish and thank her for understanding and supporting me working for the PhD.

Ping Zhou
Leuven, December 2008