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GROWTH AND LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA: THE HONG KONG EXPERIENCE

By

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ABSTRACT

Growth and Limitations of Social Science Research Institutions in Asia: The Hong Kong Experience

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This paper discusses some of the strategies and consequences of developing social science research institutions in Asia. Emphasis is placed upon those research institutions intending to facilitate the research activities of University faculties. The Social Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is used to illustrate the general points of discussion.

The structure of empirical social research activity has been shifting from solo practice to institutional approach. How should research institutions in Asia be formed? Some of the appropriate strategies under discussion are inter-institutional cooperation, development of local leadership, and integration of teaching and research. The importance of research institutions lies in the fact that they collectivize and hence magnify the intellectual, technical, and political resources of research members. In spite of certain limitations, research institutions could make important contributions to the implantation and local relevance of social science disciplines and also to the utilization of social science knowledge in Asian societies. For example, research institutions are usually in an advantageous position to gain financial and informational support, to organize interdisciplinary studies, to generate a favorable social climate for the exchange of intellectual ideas and research experiences, to promote collegiality and mutual control among research

members, to provide manpower and technological resources necessary for extensive studies, to facilitate the compilation and dissemination of research findings, to develop trained manpower for action programs, to take on policy research and work with policy makers and implementers, and to provide consultation and informational basis for the formulation and actualization of social policies and programs.

GROWTH AND LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN ASIA: THE HONG KONG EXPERIENCE

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This paper is an attempt to (1) identify some of the useful strategies for developing a social science research institute, and (2) discuss some of its possible contributions to the progress of social science and social policy in Asia. In the course of discussion, I shall heavily draw upon my own experience with the field of sociology and with the Social Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. But I shall attempt to suggest generalized statements about other social science disciplines and research institutions. In a way, this is an effort to draw generalizations from a single case.

Empirical social research was originated from the concern with practical social problems. In both Europe and America, the humanistic concern with social ills and under-privileged groups gave rise to the demand for fact-finding surveys in the nineteenth century. These research efforts were viewed as necessary and desirable tools for social reform and legislation (see Abrams, 1951; and Oberschall, 1972). As Oberschall (1972: 4-7) has observed, however, the demand for empirical research was to a large extent independent from the demand for social science. The demand for sociology, for instance, was mainly resulted from the intellectual concerns with formulating broad, universal schemes of social evolution and change. Until recently scholars in sociology were mostly social thinkers and were seldom engaged in empirical research.

It was in the early twentieth century that sociology and empirical research began to be combined into the same role. The role of sociologists hence shifted from social thinker to social scientist. The introduction of scientific orientation into the realm of sociology has led to an overwhelming concern with "objective" empirical research on human behavior for the purpose of formulating and testing concepts and theories, but it has also led to a detachment from practical problems of the society.

Social researchers in socialist countries may remain closely tied up with social-political affairs and ideologies. In the People's Republic of China, for example, the only justified use of social research is the advancement of social life and revolution (Lau, 1974). As Gouldner (1970) has observed, the mandate of Soviet sociology is the integration of different sectors of the society in the process of industrialization. Most social scientists in democratic countries, however, choose to confine themselves within university campus, playing with abstract concepts and sophisticated methodological tools but making little contribution to the solution of practical problems. Only recently has there emerged a powerful force in sociology, which pushes toward an increased concern with the application of social science knowledge to the solution of practical problems. The proponents express their ideas and carry out their activities under the titles like "Marxian Sociology," "Radical Sociology," "New Sociology," or "Applied

Sociology" (for some references, see Gouldner, 1965; Valdes & Dean, 1965; Shostak, 1966; Lazarsfeld, 1967; Deutsch & Howard, 1970; Douglas, 1970; Freeman & Sherwood, 1970; and Anderson, 1971). The trend has caught the attention of an increasing number of social scientists. The debate on the possible contributions of social science to social intervention has been heated and visible at both national and international meetings of professional associations. C. Wright Mills (1959) is one of the most well-known advocators for the participation of social scientists in political roles. Other major proponents include, for example, Robert Lynd (1940), Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1967) and Alvin W. Gouldner (1970). As Hauser (1969b) has noted, the actionist ideology is particularly popular among graduate students and younger members of sociology faculties.

There are limitations of the existing social science knowledge (Spengler, 1969; Gouldner, 1970; and Phillips, 1971), but I tend to share the view of Rossi (1969) that in general, social scientists have reached the stage of maturity where they can and should turn to the pragmatic problems of what is a good society and which social arrangements are to be preferred to others. A social scientist, however, should protect himself against ideological bias in the process of scientific inquiry. In his Presidential Address Ogburn (1930) explicitly proposed that a social scientist should play dual roles: scientific researcher and social engineer. As a scientist in the process of social research, he should observe the scientific norms and behave as value-free as possible. But as a social engineer or

citizen, he should be concerned with the implications of his social science knowledge to the improvement of social life. Ogburn (1930) made a beautiful comment on this issue:

> "It is not necessary for a scientist to be a scientist all the time. He can temporarily shut the door to his laboratory and open for a while his door to the beauty of the stars, to the romance of life, to the service of his fellow men, to the leadership of cause, to the applause of his audience, or to the adventure in the great out-of-door. But when he returns to his laboratory he will leave these behind; although there is a beauty, a romance, a service, a leadership, and an adventure of a kind not to be found in the laboratory."

In spite of the enthusiastic movement toward social intervention, there is a great gap between the existing body of social science knowledge and the society's employment of that knowledge in social policies and programs (Hauser, 1969a). As social sciences in developing countries are less valued than those in developed nations, it could be expected that the gap is relatively greater in the developing world. After a review of Unesco's endeavours to implant social sciences in developing countries, de Franz (1969) concluded that apart from economics, social sciences are not yet commonly recognized as having direct operational utility. Nevertheless, the educated public as well as the policy makers in the developing world have been increasingly conscious of guiding changes through planning (Hurd & Johnson, 1969). As a consequence, the opportunities for social scientists to undertake empirical research and to perform social engineering tasks will very likely increase. But the question is: how do we facilitate the contribution of social science research to the formulation and actualization

of social policy? There are certainly many ways. In this paper I shall concentrate on the role of research institutes.

Traditionally the style of research activity in social science has been essentially "solo practice." An investigator (the master) works with a few students or junior professionals (his apprentice). This style of research remains popular today. However, the scope of empirical research has become more extensive, and the research technology has become more sophisticated and complex. A greater number of manpower are hence required for the conduct of empirical research, and these manpower have to be coordinated in the process of inquiry. The formation of research teams for special research purpose has already become a common practice. More important is the emergence and growth of research centres and institutes. Empirical research activity has thus been undergoing structural changes from a "craft model" to an "organizational model" (Form, 1971).

In recent years there has been a growing number of research organizations not only in advanced Western societies, but also in Asian regions. The two Universities in Hong Kong, for instance, have created a number of social science research institutes and centres. The Hong Kong University has the Centre of Asian Studies, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong has also built a number of research organizations such as the Institute of Chinese Studies, Centre for Communication Studies, Centre for East Asian Studies, Geographic Research Centre, Economic Research Centre, and Social Research Centre. Outside the

University campus, there are Census & Statistics Department of the Hong Kong Government, Research Department of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Universities Service Centre, and Union Research Institute, etc. The questions arise: what are the appropriate strategies for developing social science research organizations in Asia? and how would they contribute to the growth of empirical social science[1] and to the solution of social problems? As I have had direct experience with the Social Research Centre (hereafter abbreviated as SRC) of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (hereafter abbreviated as CUHK) for some years, I shall use it as illustrations in the forthcoming discussion. I wish to emphasize that as I shall spell out later, SRC operates within a university and it aims at facilitating the research activities of faculty members. This paper is therefore primarily dealing with one type of research institutions.

First of all, let me say a few words about SRC. It was established in November 1969. As part of CUHK, it serves as an interdisciplinary research facility to be utilized by social science faculty members who intend to undertake social-scientific studies in Chinese society.

SRC aims at undertaking studies which not only contribute to the advancement of basic knowledge, but also have practical policy implications for the people in Chinese society. In principle, the Centre wishes to study Chinese society in various localities including, for examples, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and oversea Chinese communities. Because of the

accessibility of research information, the Centre has, in fact, mainly focused on Chinese social behavior in Hong Kong. With the financial support from the University, the Hong Kong Government, private foundations and voluntary agencies, SRC staff have investigated a number of social phenomena in Hong Kong, including the spatial economy of street trading, social-political and economic implications of planning and developing a new town, social causes of juvenile offenders, social and psychological aspects of fertility behavior, patterns of neighborhood interaction in public housing areas, housing policy and internal migration, health attitudes and the utilization of Chinese & Western medical care, University student hostel needs, job-satisfaction of Chinese civil servants, education and training of secondary school teachers, effects of crowding on health and social adaptation, evaluation of social welfare and family planning programs, and impact of urban-industrialism on the social life of a Chinese village. Recently the Centre has begun to extend its scope of study to the People's Republic of China. Some members are gathering information about the organization and utilization of manpower in Chinese communes, the political implications of the revolutionary modern Peking opera, and the emergence and development of Maoist sociology.

The Centre consists of both administrative and research staff. In the administrative line, there are director and deputy director, administrative assistant, clerks and typists. In the research component, there are (1) research fellows, who

are faculty members of the University, (2) research specialists, who are hired project investigators and are not faculty members, (3) research assistants, (4) computer programmer, and (5) field workers and student interviewers. Research workers are organized in three major forms, depending on the nature and scope of study: (1) research programs, consisting of several social scientists who study the same target population or the same issue in a coordinated fashion from different perspectives, (2) individual projects, where one or two researchers undertake a specific study, and (3) joint studies with other institutions.

Among all the professional social scientists who have, at one time or another, taken part in SRC projects over the last five years, about 60 per cent are sociologists. The distribution of professional staff in various social science disciplines are as follows: nineteen in sociology, four in geography, three in psychology, three in anthropology, two in social work, two in economics, one in mass communication, and one in education.

The dominance of sociology in SRC is mainly due to the fact that the Centre was initiated by sociology faculties at CUHK with the assistance of visiting professors of sociology from the University of Pittsburgh in the United States. The first two directors were Drs. Burkart Holzner and Jiri Nehnevajsa, Pittsburgh professors of sociology. Each of them served for a year, and was concurrently the Chair-Professor of Sociology at CUHK. Both professors were Westerners. The third director was D . Robert Chin, an American-born Chinese who was a social psychologist from Boston University. As a

visiting faculty for one year, he served as Director of SRC as well as Chair-Professor of Sociology at CUHK. The fourth director was Dr. Ambrose Y.C. King, a Chinese from Taiwan; and he was a lecturer with permanent appointment in sociology at CUHK. As a young sociology faculty who grew up in Hong Kong, I served as the deputy director in the first few years, and then assumed the directorship in the fifth year. Several points about the development of SRC should here be noted.

In the initial period of development SRC was directed by visiting senior faculties from abroad. Given the conditions of local manpower resources at that time, it appeared to be an appropriate strategy to rely on "foreign aids." The director of a research institute has manifold responsibilities. He should be able to command the intellectual respect of members and to give professional advice and stimulation in their research work. Meanwhile he assumes a heavy responsibility in administering the internal operations, and in making external contacts. The directorship is preferrably assumed by a person who is capable of combining both intellectual and administrative leadership. These dual qualities are particularly essential when the research institute is in its infantile stage. As a pioneer, the director is charged with the crucial responsibilities of building up from scratch the manpower and financial resources, of institutionalizing the internal-organizational procedures, and of legitimizing the existence of the research institute in the university and the outside community.

Social sciences were originally developed in Western societies, and were only recently introduced into Asia. It is rather difficult to find a local person with both intellectual charisma in social science and considerable experience in organizing research operations. For the first few years, it may be desirable to borrow senior manpower from universities abroad. CUHK has had a close collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh.[2] The two Universities formed an arrangement through which (1) Pittsburgh sent its senior faculties to CUHK to assist the local faculties to build up and improve the teaching and research programs in sociology, and (2) CUHK sent students to Pittsburgh for advanced training in sociology so that CUHK would, in the future, have more competent local manpower to take over the programs.[3] As a result of the arrangement, the first two directors of SRC were both from the University of Pittsburgh. They were senior faculties in sociology, and had considerable experience in organizing teaching and research activities.

It should be underscored, however, that the use of foreign experts depends upon the social and political context. In a society of which people are skeptical of, or resistant to, foreign dominance, it may not be appropriate to have foreign professors serving in the high ranking positions of a research institute. Instead, these foreign experts may serve as consultants or advisors. In Hong Kong, there exists an ethnic stratification where Westerners generally carry higher prestige than the Chinese people. Moreover, most of

the top decision-makers in both the government and voluntary agencies are Westerners. In such a social-political context, the use of Westerners as directors of the research institute in the initial phase of development may turn out to be an advantage, as they are more readily accepted by the policy-makers and the public.

For the Centre to stand on its own feet, it must develop its own permanent local leadership. The strategy was to make a young local faculty (i.e., myself) as the deputy director throughout the first few years, so that he could learn to direct the Centre under the close supervision of an experienced director. Because of the position, the young person was not only exposed to the intellectual ideas of a senior man, but was also trained with the various skills and tactics of developing and managing a research institute. Subsequently he succeeded the directorship on a more permanent basis.

In the first four years, SRC had a turnover of directorship every year. It could not be avoided as the directors were visiting senior professors who had considerable responsibilities in their home countries and universities. In many research institutes, a change in leadership may cause a setback (de Franz, 1969). Fortunately the annual turnover did not significantly disrupt the continuity of the SRC activity, partly because for the sake of his learning experience the deputy director remained the same person and was given a great deal of responsibilities. His presence

throughout the years became a source of continuity.

The turnover of directors in SRC was in the direction of localization. The first two directors were Westerners, followed by an American-born Chinese, a Chinese scholar from the Republic of China, and finally a local Chinese. The sequence was not so specifically planned in advance, but it turned out that the pattern of turnover coincided with the general policy of localization, permitting the local faculties to gradually take over the leadership.

A positive consequence of the frequent turnover of directorship is the increase of learning opportunities for the junior local staff, particularly the deputy director. Each director has his own intellectual orientation and style of organizing a research institute. The exposure to different directors would greatly substantiate and broaden the intellectual spectrum and the administrative know-how of the local staff.

The directorship of a research institute is in itself a rewarding experience. It is not only an administrative task, but also a highly intellectual task. As the deputy director and later the director of SRC, I have to perform multiple functions, including (1) setting up, reviewing, and revising administrative procedures, (2) recruiting, supervising, and organizing staff members, (3) getting to know the psychology (personality styles, and personal interests and skills) of individual staff, (4) reconciling conflicts

among staff members (5) discussing with, and giving professional advice to, research members with regard to their areas of interest, (6) organizing research seminars and meetings, (7) receiving and distributing research information and reports (8) making connections and/or negotiations with University authorities, teaching departments, funding agencies, research institutions, publishers, government offices and voluntary agencies, (9) providing consultation services to local community agencies, and (10) meeting with visiting scholars. The multitude of responsibilities and experiences have considerably broadened my intellectual perspective and interpersonal skills. A research institute therefore contributes to the personal and intellectual growth of the director himself (Lazarsfeld, 1962).

The relationship between SRC and the Department of Sociology at CUHK deserves some attention. The first three directors were at the same time serving as Chair-Professors of Sociology. With the dual leadership roles, they were able to bring together the teaching and research programs. Administratively the Centre is independent from the teaching department, but intellectually it is closely integrated with teaching. The dual leadership, in my opinion, is a useful strategy to set up a research institute in university setting. It helps to facilitate and institutionalize the integration between research and teaching.

When the teaching and research programs are growing larger, the dual leadership responsibilities will become a

heavy burden to a single individual. After the integration is farily well institutionalized, it is desirable to introduce the strategy of leadership differentiation. In the case of the sociology "enterprise" at CUHK, the departmental chairmanship and the SRC directorship were separated in the fourth year. In order to back up and keep on the tradition of integration, it was decided that the directorship should not be a full-time job and should be assumed by a sociology faculty.

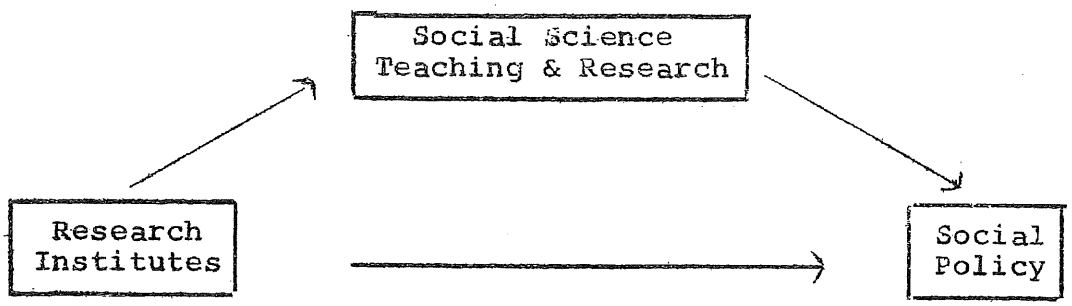
A limitation of making the director of a research institute as both a teacher and an administrator is that he can hardly spare his time and energy for doing his own research and writing papers for publication. The younger and more junior the director, the more serious is the problem. A strategy to overcome the problem is group leadership, i.e. the director involves a core group of members in the making and implementation of major decisions. This strategy has at least three advantages. First, the core group of individuals share, and thus help to reduce, the workload of the director. Second, it makes possible the "smooth" rotation of directorship among the present director and the core members. Leadership rotation protects the present director, whoever he is, from "sacrificing" himself for too many years. Note also that because of the group leadership, the rotation will not affect organizational continuity. Third, the group leadership together with the rotation strategy give more individuals the opportunity for personal and intellectual growth through directing a research institute.

The close collaboration of a research institute with teaching departments have some important functions. As the research institute is concerned, it can depend upon the teaching department for the supply of manpower to undertake various projects. A great majority of the SRC ivestigators are research fellows who are social science faculty members of the University and are conducting studies on a voluntary basis.[4] Students are also used for field observation and interviewing in many SRC studies.

A limitation of drawing manpower from teaching departments is that it sometimes creates tension between the research institute and the teaching departments (Rossi, 1971). Both of them are competing for the same pool of manpower resources. Participating in the research institute's activity makes a faculty spend less time with his own department and students.

Nevertheless, the functions of collaboration outweight the limitations. A research institute that is affiliated with teaching departments in a university would have <u>direct</u> contributions to the advancement of teaching and research in social science; and as a result it would <u>indirectly</u> contribute to the improvement of social life. No less important is that as I shall discuss later, a research institute would also have <u>direct</u> bearing upon the formulation and implementation of social policies and programs. The interrelations among research institutes, social science,

and social policy can be diagrammed below:



Let me first detail some of the major functions of a research institute in relation to the development of social science teaching and research. Whenever appropriate, I shall also point out some of the limitations.

1. TECHNICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE. A single researcher can handle a relatively small study, but an extensive research requires more facilities and more manpower of different kinds. A function of research institutes is the provision of manpower resources and research facilities to researchers. For example, SRC provides trained research assistants and fieldworkers, a sample expert, a computer programmer, an administrative assistant and several experienced typists. It also provides office space, printing and computing equipment, and a research library. These technical and administrative supports increase the efficiency of empirical research.

The availability of technical assistance is particularly essential in a university where most faculties

are new hands in empirical research. Once SRC was requested by the Government to undertake a large-scale study, which would have a good deal of theoretical and particularly policy implications. It was decided to accept the project, but there was no faculty who had the necessary research expertise on that topic. What we did was to invite a faculty who then was a new hand in empirical research but was enthusiastic of conducting the study. A group of faculties were mobilized to assisting him in the design of the study. SRC then provided him with all the necessary technical assistance (e.g., better trained research assistants, computer programmer, and research specialists with considerable experience in conducting sample surveys) in the course of implementing the research design. So far the project has produced reasonably good results and has received favorable comments from both Government officers and faculty colleagues. No less important is that the faculty in charge of the study benefited a great deal from the actual workaday experience. His methodological knowledge and empirical research skills were greatly enriched. He has established himself as a competent researcher, and is well regarded by his faculty colleagues and community agencies. With its technical resources, a research institute hence not only provides the necessary research assistance to faculty researchers, but also contributes to the advancement of their research know-how. In a way, a research institute is an educational or training centre in which faculties--especially those who are junior and are relatively

inexperienced in research--learn and upgrade their research skills through the workaday experience.

The availability of technical assistance in a research institute may also contribute to the coping with the problem of staff turnover. Investigators or research assistance may leave the university for good, before he/they complete the study. The turnover may seriously hurt or even kill the study. SRC suffered from this problem on several occasions. What the SRC did was to re-allocate the manpower, i.e. to replace the leaving individuals by other trained staff in the Centre. There were, of course, certain inconvenience and uneasiness but the project survived and still had a good chance to deliver reports in time. With its available technical resources, therefore, a research institute is in a better position to cope with the problem of staff turnover in a particular on-going study.

Besides technical assistance, research institutes also offer administrative support to faculty researchers. The administrative personnel spare researchers from administrative burden, such as recruiting assistants and interviewers, budgeting, printing questionnaires and reports, purchasing research materials, and paying the research workers. An important kind of administrative support to be noted is the storage and distribution of research information and reports. SRC has accumulated a large volume of research data and newspaper clippings, and has received a number of bulletins, statistical

reports, occasional papers and research monographs from various individuals and institutions. These informations were systematically compiled and were made available for use by researchers. SRC has also send the research reports of its members to related institutions and individuals, and thus facilitates the distribution of social science findings.

The cadre of technical and administrative staff, however, constitute an expensive apparatus with a constant appetite for money (Rossi, 1971). In order to keep the apparatus surviving and functioning, a research institute may suffer from at least two limitations. First, the institute tends to be increasingly tied to the needs of potential big clients, such as the Government, large welfare agencies, and business corporations. It follows that a research institute tends to undertake policy research, but it suffers from the loss of professional autonomy. Increasingly it works <u>for</u>, rather than <u>with</u>, policy-makers. Second, members of a research institute tends to concentrate their effort in taking on projects, collecting data, and writing rather preliminary and descriptive reports, instead of maximizing the potential utility of the existing research data. The volume of data is ever-expanding, but a larger and larger portion of it is quietly sitting in computer tapes.

Hence, the appetite for funds makes a research institute continuously undertake projects and become increasingly policy-oriented, but the institute gradually surrenders its professional autonomy and tends to under-utilize the available

research data. A strategy to balance these consequences is that the university keeps on allocating a certain amount of "hard money" to research institutes, on top of the "soft money" from private foundations and clients. SRC, for instance, receives financial support from the University on a yearly basis. As a result, it has been able to maintain the policy of working with rather than for the Government and other agencies. At the moment, SRC members are still overloaded by the rich amount of data they have accumulated over the last five years, but with the continual support from the University SRC has lately begun to shift its focus from taking on projects and collecting data to analyzing and elaborating the existing research data for publication.

2. INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE. In SRC, there have been a number of research seminars and meetings where faculties and research staff exchanged intellectual ideas and research experience. SRC has also organized several interdisciplinary research programs where faculties from different social science disciplines were brought together for the purpose of studying a particular population (e.g., a satellite town in Hong Kong) or a special event (e.g., hawking activity or fertility behavior). The SRC experience has confirmed that a research institute is in a better position than a teaching department to promote interdisciplinary research work. A teaching department is often concerned with its own professional integrity, while a research institute is primarily concerned

with understanding a particular social issue and is thus more susceptible to interdisciplinary cooperation.

Although there are difficulties in coordinating the diverging intellectual orientations and work-styles of professional social scientists from different, or even the same, disciplines, I have witnessed at least three advantages of interdisciplinary work: mutual education, colleagiality, and colleague-control. After some years of involvement with SRC activities, a colleague of mine, who was trained in geography, became interested in sociology and make "sense" in his intellectual dialogue with sociologists! Participating in research meetings or working together in the same research program undoubtedly increase the chance of mutual education among research members. No less important is that the continuous interaction also results in close friendship and colleagial feeling among members. Another consequence of working together and discussing with each other is the increase of colleague-control. Unlike a lone faculty researcher, members of a research institute--particularly those of a collaborated research program--can hardly avoid evaluating and commenting on the performance of each other in the course of empirical research. With its intellectual resources, therefore, a research institute promotes intellectual communications, mutual education, colleagiality, and professional control among faculty researchers not only within the same discipline but also between different

disciplines. It tends to facilitate the growth of an intellectual and research climate in the university campus

Research institutes make a group of independent scholars work in a coordinated fashion. A limitation is that for the sake of the collective fate, a faculty researcher has to give up, at least to some extent, his own professional autonomy in regard to both technical and social-economic terms of work.[5] His research ideas and conduct inevitably subject to the evaluation and control of the director and other members of the institute. Within the research institute, members of a collaborated research program generally have a relatively lower degree of technical autonomy than a solo researcher. Moreover, as a complex organization a research institute necessarily develops bureaucratic rules. Faculty researchers are expected to observe these rules. There are, for example, regulations and standards for the hiring of and payment to research assistants and fieldworkers, for the reimbursement and reporting of research expenses, and for the data right and publication of research findings. A faculty researcher, therefore, can not be completely autonomous in both technical and social-economic terms. The bureaucratic rules together with the professional control among colleagues generate tensions between the institute and the autonomy-oriented scholars (see also Form, 1971). As a result, research institutes tend to be less attractive to autonomy-seeking faculties (Rossi, 1971).

3. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT. Research institutes perform an important role in the training and development of research manpower. The direct research experience and the close interaction with colleagues would broaden and upgrade a faculty researcher's intellectual scope and research skills. I had already commented and illustrated this point, when I was discussing the directorship and the technical and intellectual support of research institutes to faculty researchers. Let me now turn to research assistants and students.

All ressarch assistants in SRC are university graduates, holding a first degree in social science. In the past five years, SRC has hired a total number of twenty research assistants. Most of them work full-time, while some work half-time as they are also graduate students in the University. Their primary duty is to gather and analyze data under the supervision of faculty researchers. It was not infrequent that a research assistant was deeply involved in the entire process of a research project, starting from the planning of research to the writing up of research reports. A research institute therefore provides the young research assistants an excellent opportunity to learn, under the close supervision of faculty researchers, various research strategies and skills. Through practical experience, they got to learn not only the methodological techniques, but also the tactics of organizing research activity as well as the economical and political-ethical constraints of conducting empirical research.

After a couple years of learning and practice, they normally achieve a degree of maturity and competence which makes them effective practitioners in social research.

A research assistant usually stays in the Centre for one or two years, and then proceeds to pursuing advanced studies in graduate schools. His research qualification increases his chance of getting admittance and even financial aids from graduate schools. In a way, research institutes perform a "stepping stone" function for the future generation of social scientists. Should there be no research institutes, some of the bright graduates may go into the non-academic world and gradually lose their ambition to return to the academic realm.

A limitation of hiring research assistants on a relatively short-term basis is that as the research project is concerned, it causes inconvenience and is uneconomical. It takes time and effort to train a research assistant. Soon after he becomes skillful and dependable, he leaves the research institute for good. The worse is that a research assistant may leave before the completion of the study.

SRC provides research training to students. It has a policy of hiring part-time student workers. These students are trained and then used for specific jobs such as field observation, interviewing, coding, and computing statistics. Therefore, research institutes provide students with field work opportunities. Students learn not only "what" but also "how" in a social laboratory. Note also that some graduate

students participate in SRC projects and use part of the data for their theses.

A limitation of using students is that they have a higher turnover rate and are less dependable than professional fieldworkers. The quality of SRC research data has more or less suffered from relying on students. Nevertheless, for the sake of manpower development it is still a wise strategy to use student workers.

4. FINANCIAL & INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT. A research institute represents the collective effort of a group of professional social scientists. It is usually regarded by the University authorities and outside agencies as more permanent and more dependable than a single researcher in terms of both the quality and the delivery of research products. A research institute is thus normally in a better position than an individual social scientist to gain financial support, particularly when the social scientist is young and junior in the academic circle.

Before SRC was established, most of the local social scientists in CUHK were very junior faculties. As an individual scholar, none of them has much bargaining power for research money. SRC was formed so as to pool the manpower resources together and to struggle for research grants through collective efforts. At the beginning, thirteen social science faculties jointly worked out a comprehensive, interdisciplinary proposal to study various dimensions of

the street trading activity in Hong Kong. The group succeeded to convince the Government to give a substantial amount of financial back up. The success, as we knew it, was a product of (1) the selection by local faculties of a research issue which is of deep concern to the policy-makers and the people of Hong Kong, (2) the strong leadership of the SRC director who was a senior faculty with good reputation and had considerable experience in the political game of negotiation for research money, (3) the collective credibility of research members.

Although the Centre was in the infantile stage, it gained support not only from the Government, but also from the University and other funding agencies. The University allocated to the Centre a core budget to hire some administrative staff and several research assistants. The Asia Foundation supported the Centre with two research specialist positions, and a few months later funded a Hongkong-wide study of family planning attitudes and practices. The Harvard-Yenching Institute funded the Centre for four consecutive years to conduct a large-scale interdisciplinary study of the community and family life in a newly developed town of Hong Kong. According to our knowledge, both the Asia Foundation and the Harvard-Yenching Institute were not that much interested in the quality of the proposed studies as they were concerned with supporting the institution-building and manpower development.

With the core budget from the University, the Centre provides small grants for faculties to explore their research interests. SRC sometimes used this strategy to develop research ideas and gather some preliminary data so as to increase a faculty researcher's ability to compete for larger grants from funding agencies. Furthermore, with the recommendation and auspices of a research institute, a researcher is also in a more favorable position to compete for research funds.

In many of the universities in Asia, local social scientists are mostly young and junior faculties. My experience with SRC shows that setting up a research institute is a workable strategy to gain financial support for faculty researchers, especially when the faculties are junior professionals just starting their academic careers. For a faculty with considerable reputation, the strategy may not be so essential; but I believe that it is still an asset for him.

A researcher needs not only financial support, but also informational support. Because of the collective credibility and the wide connections with local agencies, SRC researchers have been able to get access to various kinds of information, including the confidential files and records in Government departments and voluntary agencies. Research institutes, therefore, increase the accessibility of researchers to the necessary information.

5. FACULTY RECRUITMENT, MORALE AND PRESTIGE. Since a research institute provides various kinds of support--financial, technical, intellectual, and administrative--to faculty researchers, its close collaboration with a teaching department contributes to the latter's ability to (1) attract and recruit competent and ambitious faculties, and (2) maintain and promote the work morale of the existing faculties. One major way for scholars to move upward in the professional hierarchy is to work in a place where he will have opportunities to do research and then publish. Also, for an intellectual the acquisition of knowledge is in itself a rewarding experience. In the course of recruitment, the Department of Sociology at CUHK usually sent to the potential applicants an information sheet which described not only the teaching program but also the resources of SRC. The purpose, of course, is to attract competent scholars.

The close affiliation of a teaching department to the research institute also increases its departmental prestige, as the department is viewed as lively and dynamic in the production of knowledge. The Department of Sociology at CUHK carries a good reputation in the campus, partly because most of its faculties have been actively participating in SRC research projects, and have been no less, if not more, active in empirical research than other social science faculties in CUHK.

6. RELEVANCE OF TEACHING MATERIALS. A problem of teaching social science in Asia is the dependency on Western concepts, theories, and methods. Social scientists have produced and accumulated a huge number of books and papers. Most of them were written in Western languages by Western scholars on the basis of their scientific research and everyday life experience in Western societies. There is relatively little social science literature on Asian societies. In Hong Kong, for instance, for many years we have to rely on Western textbooks and even Western illustrations. The relevance of Western-oriented social science models to the Asian setting is uncertain and doubtful; and their direct and uncritical application to the understanding and planning of local social life is risky (Weidner, 1966; Hurd & Johnson, 1969; Pieris, 1969; and Alatas, 1972). Certain basic concepts may be transcultural, but we are not yet sure which ones are and which ones are not. It is not infrequent to find that some theoretical models developed in the West are fascinating but are alienated from the immediate day-to-day experience of the local faculties and students in Asia. The rise of nationalism in Asia, together with the reviving concern with the sociological maxim that no social event can be understood outside a larger social and cultural context, have led to an increasing dissatisfaction with the existing dependency on Western social science literature (Szczepanski, 1968). What could we do?

A solution is to develop research institutes in close

association with teaching departments. Should there be more empirical research on the local social behavior and should the research findings be input to the teaching programs, the relevance of teaching materials will be increased. The increased relevance of teaching materials will, in turn, produce more relevant manpower for the further development of empirical research in the local setting. As this mutually reinforcing circle goes on, social science will be increasingly rooted in the local society. The development of social science which is relevant to the local society will also contribute to the growth of general social science knowledge, as it will lead to an expansion, modification, verification, or rejection of the existing theories and methods.[6] No less important is that it will increase the contribution of social science to the solution of practical problems in the local community.

As mentioned, SRC is closely linked to teaching programs, and its research workers are mostly faculties and students. The class-room discussions among faculties and students directly benefit from their participation in empirical research activity. Many of the SRC research reports have also been distributed to various faculties and students, which could be employed to supplement teaching materials.

What SRC should and could do, but has not yet done, is to prepare and compile "case materials" for the training

of students. SRC has accumulated a substantial amount of research experience in the Chinese society of Hong Kong. It should begin to re-examine its past experiences for the purpose of systematically compiling case materials which are centered around particular strategic operations in (1) the analysis of research data, (2) the collection of qualitative field data, (3) the translation of "classical" theoretical and empirical discussions into terms of contemporary research, and (4) the conduct of comparative social research (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1950). These case materials will allow students to learn and analyze, in a systematic manner, problems of the kind they will encounter in professional research.

With its rich resources for empirical research, therefore, a research institute can considerably improve the relevance of teaching materials; and as a result, it facilitates the establishment and growth of social science in the local society.

I have mentioned some important contributions of a research institute to the advancement of social science in Asia. It facilitates empirical social research, develops competent manpower, and increases the relevance of social science knowledge. The advancement of social science would in turn contribute to the improvement of social life. Instead of running the risk of blindly applying the known foreign models to the "new" situations in their own regions, policy makers and implementers in Asia would be able to develop

appropriate policies and programs on the basis of relevant social science information. Because of its direct contributions to the upgrading of social science, a research institute hence indirectly contributes to the advancement of social policy. I wish to add that a research institute may also have direct impact on the formulation and implementation of social policy. Let me now reveal some of its direct contributions to social policy in the following paragraphs.

As discussed above, because of the research institute's need to keep the expensive apparatus going, it tends to take on policy-oriented research. Moreover, with its technological resources and collective responsibility, a research institute is more likely than an individual researcher to be viewed by policy-makers as dependable and trustworthy. Compared to an individual researcher, therefore, a research institute has a better chance to engage in policy research and also a greater influence on social policy. Let me give some illustrations.

For many years the Hong Kong Government has been perplexed by the problem of hawking. Soon after SRC was established, it was commissioned by the Government to undertake a large-scale study of hawking activity in Hong Kong, including the magnitude and size, the distribution patterns, the physical and social-economic characteristics, and the Government policies. The study was recently completed.

the physical and social-economic characteristics, and the Government policies. The study was recently completed.

The research reports not only aim at substantiating the basic social science knowledge about the structure and functioning of retailing activity in a modernizing economy, but also attempt to make policy recommendations on the basis of the scientific findings (Tse, 1974b). Although the reports are quite critical of the existing Government policies, several Government departments (e.g., Urban Services Department, Public Work Department, and The Independent Commission Against Corruption) have expressed favorable reactions.[7] Other policy-oriented studies which were funded by the Government include the evaluation of Social Welfare Department's information systems, and the Hong Kong-wide survey on the social causes of violent juvenile offenders.

SRC also worked with voluntary agencies. Members of SRC assisted a large voluntary welfare agency to assess the effectiveness of its social service centres and programs. The study has contributed to the reshaping of the agency's policies and programs (Nehnevajsa, Wong & Chung, 1971; and Chin & Chin, 1972).[8] A by-product of the study is that it has stimulated other welfare agencies to undertake evaluation of their own programs. To make another example, SRC collaborated with the Hong Kong Family Planning Association in an extensive survey of the fertility attitudes and behavior among married women. The study has affected the Association's strategies of providing family planning services (Choi & Chan, 1973).[9] The chief investigator was also

invited to serve in some policy-making committees of the Association.

The above examples show that research institutes play a major role in policy research and in the making of social policy. With its intellectual and informational resources and with its organizational credibility, a research institute can also perform an important role of social critics in the local community. SRC, for example, has been attempting to move toward the goal of "speaking for the people of Hong Kong." Several members were invited by the local mass media to publicly comment on various social issues in Hong Kong, such as hawking problems, housing needs, population problems, and crimes.

The wider the distribution of research reports to community leaders and practitioners, the greater the impact of social science on social policies and programs. With its administrative resources and external connections, a research institute is in a better position than an individual researcher to disseminate social science research reports to various community agencies.

Most research reports, however, were written in technical language. Policy-makers and the public find it very difficult, if not impossible, to follow the jargons and to comprehend what the authors are driving at. Most scholars are reluctant to take up the burden of translation.

With its technical and financial resources, a research institute can perform the function of translating the technical research reports into popular language. Up to now, almost all the SRC reports were written with both technical and English words. What has to be done is to hire a small core of staff to be in charge of translation from technical English to popular Chinese language. The impact of social science research findings on social policy and everyday life depends upon the extent to which the policy-makers and the public can get access to research reports and can adequately understand the content of reports.

As a research institute consists of social science professionals with different kinds of expert knowledge, it is in an advantageous position to provide technical advice and policy consultation to various types of action programs in the community. Members of SRC have been consulted by Government offices, voluntary welfare agencies, business associations, and health organizations. Normally a community agency approaches the Centre director who then refers the consultee to the appropriate member.

With its manpower resources, a research institute is able to design training programs and workshops for practitioners in community agencies. SRC, for instance, organized a workshop in collaboration with the University's Institute of Business Administration on "Understanding and Managing

Conflict in Organizations." The workshop was well attended by both Chinese and expatriate executives of business firms (Chin, 1972).

As a research institute necessarily trains and develops staff in the course of empirical research, it performs a function of supplying trained manpower to action programs in the community. For examples, one of the former research assistants of SRC was hired by a welfare agency to develop a research and planning unit, and another former assistant was employed by The Hong Kong Anti-Cancer Society to undertake a study of the social factors related to the occurrance of nose cancer among Chinese populations.

Lastly I wish to mention that a possible contribution of research institutes to social policy is the construction of social indicators. Like economic indicators, social (i.e., non-economic) indicators serve as a simplifying devise for knowing and planning the dynamics of social life (Bauer, 1966; and Shonfield & Shaw, 1972). They can be used for (1) providing descriptive information about the past and current social state of affairs, (2) predicting the future social trends and problems, (3) providing the informational basis for policy making and solution, and (4) developing methods of monitoring and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of social policy.[10]

Most of the existing social indicators were, however, constructed on the basis of the documents, records, and

statistics from various Government departments and community agencies. The use of these secondary data is handicapped by problems of definition and categorization (Shonfield & Shaw, 1972: 2-5). With its intellectual and technical resources, a research institute can contribute to the development of social indicators in at least two ways: (1) the conduct of extensive sample surveys which reveal not only the objective state of affairs but also the subjective views in the local community, and (2) the linking of social indicators to a social science conceptual model so as to increase their usefulness and meaningfulness in social prediction and policy development (Shonfield & Shaw, 1972: 5-8 and 27-28). Over the last four years, for example, members of SRC have undertaken a number of sample surveys on the quality of life of the residents and on the structures and operations of various types of organizations in a new town of Hong Kong (see King & Chan, 1972; Chan, 1973; and Lee, 1974b). The survey data can be used to indicating the individual and organizational state of affairs in the community under study, which will then serve as guidelines for city planning and development.

Inspite of the above mentioned contributions to social policy, research institutes have one important limitation: they tend to be politically more conservative than individual researcher (Record, 1967). A lone researcher dares to go into politically sensitive areas, should he be willing to take personal responsibility of the consequences. As a collective entrepriso, a research institute aims to

last for a long period of time, and needs to develop continuing connections with various social groups. It has to maintain its reputation for responsibility and trustworthiness, and is therefore less willing to run a risk. Unless the university continusously gives financial and political support, the research institute can hardly maintain its critical attitudes toward local affairs and policies. Note also that the conservatism of a research institute sometimes creates tension between the director and radical faculties.

To conclude this paper, let me recapituate some of the essential points. In recent years social scientists have increasingly placed emphasis on empirical research, particularly those which have practical implications. Mean while, the structure of social research has been shifting from a craft model to an organizational model. As a result of the collectivization of intellectual and political resources of faculty members, research institutes in Asia could make important contributions to the advancement of social science teaching and research, which would in turn contribute to the improvement of social life. No less important is that research institutes may also have direct implications to the making and implementation of social policies and programs. Specific illustrations were drawn from my personal experience with the Social Research Centre of The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

It should here be underscored that SRC only represents one type of research institutes. It is not the purpose of

this paper to develop a typology of research institutes and centres, but it would be worthwhile to review some of the existing typologies so as to manifest and delineate the type of research institutes being discussed in this paper. In particular, I shall discuss the typologies proposed by Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Peter Rossi.

Lazarsfeld (1962) made a distinction between general purpose and specialized units. The former covers a wide range of research topics, while the latter focuses on one specific topic. SRC is apparently a general purpose organizationa as its faculty researchers have been studying different aspects of Chinese social life.

Lazarsfeld (1962) also distinguished between facilitating and autonomous units. The difference lies in the extent to which the institute sees itself mainly as facilitating the research activities of university faculties. As SRC's researchers are mostly faculty members of CUHK, it is primarily a facilitating unit.

Focusing on the structural characteristics, Rossi (1971) classified research organizations into four categories: (1) collegium, where members tend to be of equal status and engage in few concerted research efforts; (2) consortium, which are essentially collections of faculty members each pursuing his own research interests using the research organization to provide administrative service and political leverage within the university and with funding agencies;

(3) "institutes," which arise around the use and maintenance and distribution of scarce resources, access to which has to be regulated in the name of equity; and (4) "research firms," which have elaborate division of labor, hierarchies of authority and status within their professional cadres, and whose personnel do not coincide with departmental structures. As Rossi has noted, consortium represents a majority of the research organizations today. The previous description of SRC's structures and operations indicates that SRC is, in effect, a consortium.

The above review of existing typologies suggest that strictly speaking, SRC is a general purpose consortium which attempts to facilitate the work of faculty researchers in a university. Some of the generalized statements suggested in the previous discussions, therefore, may not be applicable to other types of research organizations. I wish to propose that an important kind of research work to be carried out by Asian social scientists and policy makers in the near future is to (1) compile a list of all the social science research organizations in Asia for the purpose of formulating a systematic typology which are relevant and useful to the Asian regions and possibly to other regions as well, and (2) examine and compare the developmental strategies, and the functions and limitations of each type of research institutes and centres in relation to the advancement of social science and social policy.

Nevertheless, in view of the previous discussions

I would like to end up this paper by asserting that for the sake of developing social science teaching and research and improving social policies and programs, it would be desirable for Asian universities to build up and support research institutes and centre which are closely integrated with teaching departments.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lazarsfeld (1962), Record (1967), Form (1971) and Rossi (1971) have had excellent observations on the role of research institutes in the development of social science research. I shall make use of some of their points.

2. The primary reason is that Dr. C.K. Yang, a well-known Chinese professor of sociology at the University of Pittsburgh, has close connections with CUHK. He was an advisor to, and also an external examiner of, the Department of Sociology at CUHK. Because of his match-making, sociology faculties of the two Universities were brought together.

3. I was one of the CUHK graduates who were sent to Pittsburgh for further education in sociology.

4. In CUHK, faculties are not permitted to make extra-income from doing research or providing consultation services.

5. For an excellent discussion on the problem of social-economic and technical autonomy, see Freidson (1970).

6. Let me give a few examples. In his study of religion in China, C.K. Yang (1964) developed a conceptual typology: diffused (e.g., ancestor worship) vs. institutional (e.g., Buddism and Christianity) religion. In the study of City District Officer Scheme in Hong Kong, Ambrose King (1973) formulated the concept of "administrative absorption of politics", referring to the process through which an administrative program is introduced to depoliticize the local political activity. In the study of Chinese and Western medical services in Hong Kong, Rance Lee (1974a) suggested a set of generalized statements about the stratificational order and changes between a modern profession and its traditional counterpart in the process of modernization.

7. Let me give a few indicators. The Planning Division of the Public Work Department has found some of the findings and recommendations useful for their future planning. The Hawker Market Section of the Urban Services Department invited the chief investigator to evaluate several city planning projects. The Independent Commission Against Corruption consulted the investigator about possible ways of preventing corruption in hawking areas.

8. As a result of the study, some service programs were curtailed, while others were strengthened.

9. For example, the following two findings have been utilized by the Association: (1) Chinese women were more resistent to the use of pills than other methods of contraception, and (2) mass media are more effective than pamphlets in the dissemination of family planning knowledge.

10. For a more detailed discussion on these four points, see Elaine Carlisle, "The Conceptual structure of Social Indicators," in Shonfield and Shaw (1972: 21-32).

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