CHAPTER 4
ISSUES OF THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIOLOGY IN TAIWAN

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Brief Historical Sketch

The institutional development of sociology as an academic discipline in Taiwan can be traced back to the mid-1950s when the first two sociology departments were established in National Chung-Hsin University and Tunghai University, followed by National Taiwan University's sociology department in 1960. In the 1970s, Fu-Jen University and Soo-Chow University set up their sociology departments in 1972 and 1973, respectively. In 1983, National Cheng-Chi University changed its former department of ethnology and sociology into a sociology department, and in 1993, a sociology-oriented department of social psychology was formed in World College of Journalism. Finally, in 1995 the institute of sociology was formally established in Academia Sinica, the highest research institution of Taiwan, even though there were quite a number of sociologists already employed in various humanities and social science institutes within the Academy. In other words, there are eight bona fide sociological institutions in today's Taiwan.

Among the departments of sociology listed above, National Taiwan University and Tunghai University have both masters and doctoral graduate programs, Soo-Chow University offers a masters degree, while National Chung-Hsin University, Fu-Jen University and World College of Journalism only provide undergraduate training. A separate masters program in sociology was developed in 1987 in the graduate institute of sociology and anthropology of National Tsing-Hwa University. It should be added that National Taiwan University's graduate institute of agricultural extension has long established both masters and doctoral degree programs with a rural sociology specialization. The institute of sociology at Academia Sinica, being a non-teaching research institution, does not offer any academic degrees for students, but most of the research fellows do hold either joint full-time or part-time teaching positions in the above mentioned departments of sociology.

Other broadly speaking sociology-related academic departments or graduate institutes such as social work (sociology and social work have a long history for being one department), social welfare, children's welfare, social policy, health and welfare, and medical sociology, have been growing in many universities or colleges since the 1980s. Though they are not sociological institutions by definition, quite a few sociologists are recruited there as well.

According the most recent account in 1995, there are about 150 practicing sociologists in both teaching and research institutions in Taiwan, while in 1985 there were only 81 sociologists, almost double the number in the last ten years. Among them, 80% of them hold doctoral degrees, a significant increase in the last ten years, as in 1985 only about a half of sociologists had Ph.D.s (Chang 1996, Chiu 1986). It is still a relatively small academic community in Taiwan, in comparison to other well-established social sciences or humanities like economics, political science, law and history, but it has larger teaching manpower than psychology and anthropology. The significant growth of sociology in both quantity and quality has also boosted the self-images of sociology among sociologists themselves as a social science discipline. In 1983, sociology was self evaluated to be number six in academic ranking among the above listed seven disciplines, only above anthropology (Hsiao 1984). But in 1995, in the eyes of sociologists, sociology has ascended to the rank of number three from the top, only behind economics and psychology (Chang 1996).

On the whole, sociology as an academic social science discipline in post-war Taiwan has a relatively short history of development. Pre-war Taiwan was under the Japanese colonialism and the discipline of sociology had never been developed in colonial Taiwan between 1895 and 1945. Therefore, there was no Japanese legacy in the post-war development of the Taiwanese sociology. After the war, when Taiwan entered the post-colonial era and began to experience Chinese rule under the KMT (Chinese Nationalist Party) authoritarianism, sociology had not been treated as a legitimate modern social science for more than two decades since 1948. Sociology was either mistaken by many KMT elites for socialism or for being radical and anti-governmental, as they had observed what had happened to sociology in the 1930s and 1940s on the Chinese mainland. As a result, sociology was not encouraged to develop, if not deliberately suppressed, in the universities in the 1950s and 1960s.

More importantly, only a few mainland Chinese sociologists had come to Taiwan with the defeated KMT regime in the late 1940s. The majority of Chinese sociologist professors stayed behind when the Chinese communist regime took power in China. Therefore, the Chinese tradition of sociology that was established on the mainland had never been really transplanted into Taiwan. Without the Japanese colonial legacy and the mainland Chinese tradition, the early post-war development of sociology in Taiwan has

experienced "the breakdown of tradition" rather than "identity crisis". In retrospect, it was under such unique historical context, the institutionalization of sociology was virtually a new born academic endeavor, and it can not be seen as a process of restoration or reformation of something already pre-existed.

And in the new birth of sociology in Taiwan beginning in the early 1960s, the new core of the U.S. in the post-war world system and the Americanized sociology has played a dominant role, through providing direct assistance to the establishment of sociology departments in Taiwan's universities or producing a new breed of American trained Taiwanese sociologists for Taiwan. The influence of the American sociology contributed to the institutionalization of Taiwanese sociology until the 1970s, but it also created the "dependency" structure at which the later conscious movement toward "sinicization" turned "indigenization" or even "Taiwanization" of sociology was targeted beginning in the 1980s.

The mainland Chinese-born sociologists belong to the first and the second generations of the sociology community in post-war Taiwan and most of them are now either deceased or retired from the active academic world. Among the 150 active and practicing sociologists, the majority are Taiwanese-born and they belong to either the third or the fourth generation of the Taiwanese sociologycommunity. The third generation Taiwanese sociologists emerged as the backbone of the sociology community in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most of them are now at the age between 45 and 55. The fourth generation, as former students of the third generation, joined the sociological enterprise in the late 1980s, and most of them are under the age of 40. Judged from both the life experience and age structure of the active sociologists, the Taiwanese sociology can be characterized as an intellectual endeavor mostly practiced by the younger to middle-aged Taiwanese-born scholars.

Overall Assessment

Employing the analytical tool of the " science paradigmatic division of labor in the world system", Hsiao (1982) has characterized the development of sociology in Taiwan between the 1960s and the early 1980s as a "dependent development", a sheer reflection of the paradigm shift of American sociology from the dominant Parsonian functionalism in the 1960s to a multiple paradigmatic status since the 1970s. From the 1051 English references cited in 123 journal articles written in Chinese between 1960 and 1981, the majority referred to the work by American sociologists. Among all Chinese textbooks of sociology published then were virtually a copy of American introductory sociology textbooks. No empirical data or research findings were drawn from the work done by the early Chinese sociologists of the pre-war mainland era or

by the first and second generation sociologists in the post-war Taiwan period. The universality of American sociology was never questioned or challenged, and the issue of cultural uniqueness or "national sociology" was never conceived to be a legitimate one. By 1980, the situation of sociology in Taiwan could only be portrayed as a "peripheral paradigm" of the "core paradigm" developed in American sociology since the world war II.

However, beginning in the early 1980s, the call for the indigenization of social science under the name of sinicization was raised by liberal social scientists. The social science community, especially in sociology, psychology, and anthropology, became more reflexive about its research questions and more anxious to make social science relevant to Taiwan's social reality. It is important to appreciate the conscious movement toward the indigenization of sociology and other social sciences in the broader historical context which Taiwan had experienced since the early 1970s.

Taiwan's serious diplomatic setback in 1972 of being expelled from the U.N. inspired many intellectuals to begin a journal of self-discovery for themselves and for Taiwan as a whole. Liberal intellectuals began to demand political reform, as a growing nationalist sense of crisis brought about an unprecedented collective consciousness to deal with the problem of survival then facing Taiwan. Because of external frustration on the diplomatic front, serious attention was directed to internal reforms, and Taiwan reality began to concern many intellectuals and writers. The indigenous literature movement was the first deliberate effort by many of the younger Taiwan writers to search for literary ideas from real people in real life, a conscious attempt to move away from the Western modernism that had dominated Taiwan's literature in the 1960s to Taiwanese social realism. The movement reached its high point during the period of controversy over "indigenous literature" in the mid-1970s; since then social realism has established its legitimate status in Taiwan's literature (Hsiao, 1996). The redirection toward indigenization also extended to other cultural fields like music, performing arts and movies. The social scientists' self-discovery and self-criticism could be seen as a further extension of such overall indigenization awareness among Taiwan's intellectuals since the mid-1970s. The timing also coincided with the emergence of the third generation younger sociologists as a visible new force in Taiwan beginning in the late 1970s.

With the growing number of highly trained sociologists returning from the States and joined the indigenization movement since the early 1980s, the landscape of Taiwan's sociology has changed since then. According to a survey of Taiwanese sociologists on the current state of sociology in 1983, the majority of surveyed sociologists were quite dissatisfied with the development of sociology in the last twenty years. The self-criticism expressed included that sociology of Taiwan was short of critical mass, lacking distinctive character and there was no mainstream effort of development. Weak theoretical insights and

inadequate empirical work were the other general criticisms of sociology up to 1983. The majority of sociologists also expressed great concern about political influence on the healthy development of sociology as a reflexive social science in the past decades under the KMT's authoritarian rule. They also felt quite strongly that only a free and democratic society could foster a mature sociology. As demonstrated in the later political liberalization and democratic transition phases, sociology as empirical science and critical intellectual endeavor has contributed to the making of Taiwan's democratization. More directly, quite a number of sociologists as pro-democracy intellectuals have actually been involved in initiating, mobilizing, and defending the pro-democracy forces derived from the resurrected civil society.

As to the call for the indigenization and sinicization of sociology, most sociologists in the early 1980s agreed that such conscious effort was important and necessary. Why indigenization of sociology? Many maintained that it was needed for a rooted development of sociology in Taiwan, for its contribution to social development, and for establishing sociology's cultural and historical identity. However, they were quick to emphasize that indigenization or sinicization of sociology was not aimed at halting the learning from the western sociology or advocating the creation of a nationalistic sociology. Indigenization should be understood as a collective awakening not as illusion making. As Hsiao concluded from the findings of the survey, an indigenizing sociology should reflect the dual conceptions of maintaining sociology's universality on the one hand, and cultural and national relevance on the other. In other words, indigenization of sociology was not only designated to contribute to the rooted development of Taiwanese sociology by deepening the sociological knowledge about Taiwanese social reality, but also to the rejuvenation of world sociology by providing new elements stemming from diversified and different specific cultural traits. In essence, the ideal of the sinicization/Taiwanization of sociology is a combination of both indigenization and globalization (Hsiao 1884, 1987).

Finally, several concrete steps were formulated toward the implementation of the indigenization of sociology in Taiwan. First, more vigorous and grounded empirical studies of various profound societal transformations and their related problems in post-war Taiwan experience should be encouraged. Second, in addition to the identification of critical subject matters for research into Taiwan's great transformations, serious attention should also be paid to the uniquely Chinese social concepts, cultural traits, and historical phenomena (Hsiao 1987).

As reflected in the growth of sociologists since the 1960s, the productivity and the areas of specialization indicated from the published articles and self-claimed expertise have also expanded significantly. According to Chiu's study (1986) of the published articles by Taiwanese sociologists from 1957 to 1986, the article-author ratio before 1969 was 1.86, it dropped to 1.59 between 1970 and 1974, and it increased to 2.42 during the period of 1975 and 1979, and

finally the ratio jumped to 3.65 between 1980 and 1986. To compare the articles published between 1975-1979 and 1980-1986, the number of areas of concentration with more than five authors increased from five to thirteen in the ten year period. In 1986, the most concentrated researched areas included demography and population, social problems, family, social stratification and differentiation, research methods, urban sociology, rural sociology, social theories, complex organization, group interaction, women's studies, social policy and social welfare, and culture.

Moreover, the diversification and pluralization of theoretical orientations have prevailed since the 1980s. Before 1970, more than 75% of the published articles were non-theoretical; in the decade of the 1970s, structural-functionalism then dominated Taiwanese sociologists' theoretical mind set. By the mid-1980s, diversified theoretical inclinations were observed and many other theoretical perspectives appeared such as world system theory, conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and critical theory. The world system theory was even taken as the second most favored theoretical inspiration only next to the structural-functionalism, a Taiwanese reflection of the American sociology's paradigm shift since the mid-1970s.

Recently, Chang (1996) has compiled 952 published articles in journals and edited volumes written by Taiwanese sociologists between 1991 and 1995, and his assessment further indicates continuity and change of the research specialization of Taiwan's sociology over the past two decades. Fields of concentration like sociological theory, demography and population, social change, sociology of development, social stratification, and urban sociology have continuously occupied the central position in Taiwanese sociological writings since 1980. That the rising areas of research interests are sociology of the family, gender and aging, environmental sociology, and cultural studies in the 1990s once again reflects Taiwanese sociology's response to the growing public concern for these emerging social issues facing Taiwan as well as the new focus of sociological theorizing in the west.

Currently, most Taiwanese sociologists still publish their articles in local journals and in the Chinese language. But there is a growing interest for Taiwan's sociologists to publish in foreign languages (mainly English) and in journals outside Taiwan. From 1991 to 1995, 30 out of the total 150 sociologists have contributed their work in more than fifty different overseas or international journals. It can be seen as a slow yet growing sign of Taiwanese sociologists' engagement in the international social science community.

Tasks and Challenges

In today's Taiwan, sociology is gradually being considered to be a rising intellectual enterprise with an established legitimate status in the academic

community of social science. Sociologists are seen as a group of scholars who tend to be liberal and critical about many current social and political issues. To many, sociologists are not only trouble-shooters but also problem-solvers. There are growing expectations that sociologists would provide plausible theoretical explanations for the ever changing social realities, offer feasible societal and policy solutions to many emerging social problems, and be willing to act as advocates or social critics. Indeed, different sociologists have performed multiple social roles in present Taiwanese society besides teaching and research. The government agencies, media, and civil society organizations have looked to sociologists for advice, comments, or participation when they confront society-related issues. Taiwanese sociologists now find themselves "needed" and "useful". It was particularly true during the liberalization and democratic transition period; many active sociologists played noticeable roles in promoting various social movements and defending the pro-democracy cause. As Taiwan has entered its democratic consolidation phase, the role of sociology might also change. Besides provision of necessary sociological knowledge and insights for ensuring that a democratic way of life be sustained in Taiwanese society, sociologists need also to engage in timely research on the dynamic changes of the state - civil society relations in the post-authoritarian era (Hsiao1995a).

To suggest that to look into the state - society relations as one of the theoretical and research challenges for Taiwanese sociologists is to make sociology not only relevant to Taiwan's recently experienced political transformations, but also to the central understanding of what Taiwanese society has uniquely evolved and transformed. Serious sociologists should explore the continuity and change of the institutional and constituent bases of the civil society in Taiwan since the 17th century when Han Chinese began to emigrate to the island.

The formation and transformation of the state - society relations in the past four hundred years need to be studied historically as Taiwan had evolved from a "immigrant society" (up to the Japanese occupation in 1895), to a "colonial society" (1895 - 1945), to a "local society" under KMT's pan-Chinese ideology until it was indigenized by the Taiwanese civil society in the 1980s, and eventually to a "national society" since the late 1980s when the Taiwanese people were conscious about' their own national identity in facing PRC's unification pressure. What can be said about the civil society in the various historical formations of Taiwan? How has the Taiwanese civil society interacted with and responded to the changed states (from the Ching empire to the Japanese colonial state and to the mainland Chinese KMT regime)? In what ways have the different states shaped, suppressed, or facilitated the Taiwanese civil society formation? And finally, why could the Taiwanese civil society have succeeded in transforming the KMT state since the 1980s by democratization?

If the Taiwanese civil society has finally indigenized and Taiwanized the KMT state from the Chinese mainland, will it be willing to accept another mainland Chinese state ruling Taiwan? All these crucial historical and theoretical issues need to be properly answered and in sociological terms.

To tackle the historical formation and transformation of the state - society relations in the contexts of Taiwan's changing social character is to inspire Taiwanese sociologists to relate the seemingly universal present to the intriguingly unique past. The unique historical experience of Taiwan, in this regard, might offer new insight into the current discourse on civil society in the world sociology.

To push the issue further, Taiwanese sociologists might also take the initiative of comparing and contrasting patterns of the emergence of civil society in three Chinese societies, namely, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Chinese mainland (Hsiao, 1995b). As briefly discussed, Taiwan's civil society has developed into a mature and full-fledged one and many institutionalized civil society groups have enjoyed legal protection for their autonomy and independence from state's interference and control. The social movements as a viable form of civil society force have even transformed the nature of the state. Civil society also takes other forms in regulating and mediating various political and social issues. Foundations, NGOs, and privately funded research institutions and think tanks are actively engaging themselves in policy debates on national identity, environment, welfare, gender equality, labor, and cross-straits relations.

The experience of civil society in Hong Kong was different with the peculiar transition from colonialism without independence. The recently awakened civil society largely led by the new middle class has strived to protect Hong Kong's way of life from being jeopardized by the transition of state power through the pro-democracy movement. Unfortunately, the larger masses were not fully mobilized to back up the effort, the capitalist class was even afraid that democratization would bring about political instability, stronger working class power, and less business freedom. The middle class-led civil society pro-democracy movement was further caught in the uncertain political transition between the out-going colonial British state and the incoming socialist Chinese state and, as a result, the Hong Kong civil society was frustrated in dealing and negotiating with the two totally different ideological states. However, the awakened civil society is not expected to completely die out after 1997. With more cautious and guarded pragmatism, the emerging Hong Kong civil society groups and pro-democracy forces may seek ways to survive and sustain their strength leading to the post-transition era. The future state - society relations are yet to be seen.

The economic reforms since the late 1970s in China have contributed to the rise of a nascent civil society as manifested in the large scale pro-democracy protest in the late 1980s. Moreover, the changes in Chinese economic and

social structures thus far may also be the likely basis for the existing weak and not-yet-institutionalized civil society force. The transient mobilization of the students, intellectuals, and urban workers in the Tiananmen Square in 1989 can not be taken so far as to argue for the rise of civil society in China. The aftermath of the suppression by the Beijing state of the pro-democracy movement further indicated that the nascent civil society was still in a fragile position in facing the strong state. But as long as the open-door reforms continue, and the conflict between the political center and local governments widens, the prospective civil society's institutional social and economic elements are likely to strengthen in selected "developed" coastal regions and urban areas.

The preliminary observations of the different courses of the civil society in the three Chinese societies have provided an initial response to the on-going debate over culture and civil society. From the three cases of Taiwan, Hong Kong and China, it is quite clear that the Chinese culture per se is not necessarily detrimental to the possible rise and development of civil society. It is not the question as whether or not certain cultures can or can not develop civil society, but rather under what conditions the strength of civil society can be released, expressed, and even further mobilized into an effective political force to pressure the state to transform. To be more specific, it is the nature and configurations of the state power and specific conjunctures at the time that determine the trajectories of civil society formation and mobilization (Hsiao 1995b).

Once again, the Taiwan experience in the realm of state - civil society relations in comparison with other Chinese and Confucian culture influenced East Asian societies should be more fully appreciated and examined in order to provide sociological insights into the current mainstream discourse developed in the west. Being the "insiders", the Taiwanese sociologists are better equipped to take on the challenge. The same can be said of the sociologists in Hong Kong and China. One can further suggest that the extent of the intellectual independence and the degree of maturity of sociology in these three culturally Chinese societies can be measured by how the important yet sensitive issue of state - civil society is to be treated by sociologists in Taiwan, Hong Kong and China. Better yet, sociologists in these three Chinese societies can find a way to collaborate in a comparative - historical study on the changing state - society relations in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and selected coastal regions in South China. The research task suggested here is only one of the many possible areas where Taiwanese sociologists can and should make the best use of the Taiwan experience.

By way of conclusion, it is therefore argued that a holistic sociological examination of what and how Taiwan has evolved from an established Chinese immigrant society to an emerging Taiwanese nation-state could be the

challenge to the sociologists in Taiwan to further indigenize the macro and historical sociology in Taiwan. It is hoped that such sociological endeavor in Taiwan may also contribute to the globalization of Taiwanese sociology in the future. The unique Taiwan experience seen as a part of the universal human experiences in different societies of the world is unquestionably the most fruitful point of exchange and dialogue between Taiwanese sociologists and the international sociological community.

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PART II
WESTERNIZATION, INDIGENIZATION, AND A TRUE UNIVERSALISM