

Some Thoughts on Applied Social Research and Training in African Universities

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There is hardly any need here to argue, yet again, the case for applied social research and training in any country, least of all in new states where leaders are grappling with the massive tasks of social engineering and directed change in their human environments.¹ Let us assume the case for their importance has been made and is, in any event, so patently obvious that we need concern ourselves only with the more pressing issues and problems in realizing their full potentiality and relevance for the planning and development process and in their institutionalization as valued and enduring activities within the framework of the new national societies.

I will focus upon four inter-related problem areas associated with past and current efforts to achieve greater effectiveness in the performance and more rapid institutionalization of the applied social research and training function. One concerns the issue of where the function should be based within a university, within government, or somewhere between the two. The fact is that nine of the ten organized social science research institutes in contemporary Africa with which we are concerned (see Table 1) are already an integral part of their respective national universities, and the one exception (NISER-Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research) is closely associated with a university (Ibadan). The issue as to whether they should remain so, or be partially or completely detached, remains a very active one.

The next two problem areas concern the relationships of university-based institutes with their two constituencies, namely, (i) the rest of the university of which they are a part, and (ii) the governments to which they seek to provide usable social science knowledge and policy guidance on high priority problems of national development. Finally, I will discuss some aspects of the problem of institutionalizing an applied social research institute.

Before turning to these major issues it is in point to specify a working definition of "applied social research".² The concept "research" is very

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1 The case has been made numerous times. See especially David E. Bell, "Allocating Development Resources: Some Observations Based on Pakistan Experience", in *Public Policy* (1960), pp. 84-106; and Francis X. Sutton, "The Uses of Social Research in the Developing Countries", in Bert F. Hoselitz and Wilbert E. Moore (eds.), *Industrialization and Society*, UNESCO: Mountain, 1963, pp. 393-411.

2 The adjective "social" is used here in its generic sense, i.e., to the totality of human society, including all of its analytical aspects (i.e., economic, political, sociological, etc.).

Table 1—SELECTED SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTES IN MIDDLE AFRICA

Country & Location	Name	University Status	Representation on Governing Body
Nigeria (Ibadan)	NISER—Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research	Independent	Government/University
Nigeria (Enugu)	EDI—Economic Development Institute, University of Nigeria, Nsukka	University Institute	Government/University
Ghana (Accra)	ISSER—Institute of Statistics, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana	University Institute	Government/University
Ethiopia (Addis Ababa)	IES—Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Haile Selassie I University	University Institute	University Committee
Kenya (Nairobi)	IDS—Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi	University Institute	University Board
Zambia (Lusaka)	ISR—Institute of Social Research, University of Zambia	University Institute	University Committee
Congo (Kinshasa)	IRES—Institut de Recherches Economiques et Sociales, Lovanium University	Part of Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences	Faculty Committee
Uganda (Kampala)	MISR—Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, Kampala	Part of Faculty of Social Sciences	Executive Committee
Tanzania (Dar es Salaam)	ERB—Economic Research Bureau and BRALUP—Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning, University of Dar es Salaam	Parts of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	Faculty Board, but Programme Committees with Gov./Univ. Representation

global; there are a variety of types of research classifiable in numerous ways. At its core is the aim of discovering and interpreting new knowledge through systematic and objective inquiry. But, as Robert Lynd asked, "knowledge for what?" The answer is usually given in terms of the simplistic pure-applied dichotomy. Other dichotomies, equally simplistic, and paralleling the above, are "theory-oriented vs. policy-oriented" or "discipline-oriented vs. problem-oriented". We are all familiar with the inadequacy and distorting effects of these dichotomies, i.e., much so-called "pure, theory-oriented, discipline-oriented" research has proved subsequently, perhaps long after the event, to be very potently applicable; and much so-called "applied, policy-oriented, problem-oriented" research has produced rich theoretical insight. Further refinements are necessary; indeed, it seems to be more fruitful to think of a continuum of types of research between the polar extremes of a scholar's singular concern with developing the theory of his discipline, on the one hand, and "mere fact-grubbing" to shed light on possible solutions to a very immediate practical problem, on the other. Along this continuum research can be differentiated in a variety of ways, e.g., according to duration (long-term, medium-term, short-term); its disciplinary or multi-disciplinary orientation; its concern with a basic problem area or specific policy issue; and so forth.

Alvin Gouldner, among others, has suggested that "an applied social science is above all concerned with the prediction and production of social and cultural change".³ However, it is not the focus upon social and cultural change that is the most useful (or valid) differentium; at most, it is only part of a definition. The major revolution in the theoretical social sciences during the past decade has been the shift from static to dynamic modes of analysis for the study and comparison of patterns of change and development in both historical and contemporary perspective.⁴ The critical element in a satisfactory working definition is surely the declared *intention* of the researcher or the research institute, namely, is the use of the new knowledge gained through research aimed explicitly at providing deeper insight into significant problems of development.

Acceptance of these components in a working definition of "applied research" (i.e., a concern with significant problems of development and an explicit intention that research should contribute to a deeper understanding and solution of those problems), still leaves us with the need to specify criteria of "significance" and to differentiate types of research within this category. There are obvious difficulties in specifying criteria of significance

³ Alvin W. Gouldner, "Explorations in Applied Social Science", in Alvin W. Gouldner and S. M. Miller (eds.), *Applied Sociology: Opportunities and Problems* (New York: Free Press, 1965), p. 8.

⁴ Gouldner's (and other's) focus upon "change" as the differentia between so-called "applied" and "pure" is not tenable because it is based on a temporal, and changing, disparity. He adds: "In contrast [to the applied social sciences] many of the current models of pure sociology have not developed an analysis of change... Applied social science requires concepts enabling it to deal with change, while much of pure social science today is oriented to the analysis of stable social structures in the equilibrium". This is no longer true, and in any event you cannot build a classificatory scheme or typology on a temporal deficiency in one of the differentia.

(who determines them, how are they determined, etc.), as well as in ensuring sincerity and fulfilment of intention, but we will not dwell on such difficulties here except to note their importance. Regarding kinds of applied research, one can identify, two main types:

- (1) Basic (long-or-middle-range) objective research oriented toward *problem areas* in development, autonomously initiated by the researcher or his institute, but not aimed at prescribing an immediate solution to a practical problem, although research findings will be made available and can be, and hopefully will be, applicable to practical problems as they arise. Examples would include: income distribution patterns; rural-urban migration; unemployment; protection policy for industry; educational patterns, curricula and selection procedures; regional planning models; effects of different types of taxation; land tenure systems; class stratification; civil service career patterns; settlement scheme structures; administrative training; and administration of co-operatives.
- (2) Specific (short-term) problem research, responding to a specified request from a user or to a manifestly demanding situation, aimed at providing by a deadline immediately usable findings and policy alternatives for the immediate solution to a specific practical problem of development. Examples would include: ways to reduce cost of agricultural inputs; ways to improve efficiency of import licensing system; more effective placement of school-leavers; causes of recent 15 per cent increase in demand for a particular cereal; effectiveness of agricultural extension services; and area-based planning procedures.

One must recognize a fairly broad continuum of intermediate types of applied research between (1) and (2), varying according to the degree of specificity of the problem, its relatedness to and illumination of a broader problem area of development, the degree of specification and control by the user, and the extent to which research findings identify a range of policy alternatives and their likely consequences or prescribe single courses of action. In any event, the several types, including and along the applied spectrum between these two main types have tended to constitute the subject-matter of research of most applied social research institutes.

I—THE RATIONALE FOR UNIVERSITY-BASED INSTITUTES

Among the arguments for basing a new state's applied social science research capability at its national university are:

- (i) that modern universities are by their very nature the repositories and bases of that concentration of scholars from a variety of inter-related disciplines possessing the requisite theory, knowledge and technology—imperfect and incomplete though it may be—required for professional social science research;
- (ii) that scholars with these professional qualifications will tend to gravitate to university careers, certainly in the critical initial years of

national development, and undoubtedly also in the long run because of career preferences;

- (iii) that the acute shortage of social science research specialists as well as financial constraints dictate a single national concentration of the capability;
- (iv) that a university base vastly increases both the informal and formal diffusion of specializations and skills, research findings and new methodologies of research and analysis to the only other segment of the society (i.e., the university community) preoccupied with these same issues;
- (v) that universities in developing countries are expected, and some of their social science scholars are personally motivated and determined, to work on policy-relevant applied developmental research—in this way both they and the university can be legitimated through the demonstration of their value as a scarce and critical national resource and the illumination of the relevance of the university, as a national institution, to their society and its problems; and
- (vi) that university-based scholars are free from day-to-day operational activities and have a greater opportunity to be objective and to infuse their research and analysis with more comparative and theoretical insight.

These are some of the elements in the rationale; there are undoubtedly others; but even these are controversial.

Those who oppose the concentration of applied social research in universities tend to minimize the importance of the foregoing arguments; moreover, they tend to stress additional considerations such as, the lack, or far greater difficulty of access by university-based scholars to relevant data, and particularly that of a classified nature; the absence of pressure and sanctions to nudge or induce a university-based scholar to do a piece of much-needed research in a high-priority problem area and complete that research and produce findings and policy alternatives on time and in a usable form; and, in varying degrees of weighting, all of those difficulties, constraints and complications characteristic of intra-university and university-government relationships discussed below. Persons of this persuasion tend to advocate situating an applied social research capability either in an independent institute with only very loose connections with a university, like NISER, or in government ministries themselves.

The compromise arrangement that has tended to evolve has been what might be called the "University Institute" formula, in which an effort is made to minimize the disadvantages and capitalize upon the advantages of a university base. Whether they have the legal status of a full-fledged university institute (i.e., a status co-ordinate with and not part of any faculty), the nine university-based organized research units listed in Table 1, have, in fact, tended to function in a similar fashion, although there have been interesting differences in the effectiveness with which they have coped with the twin problems of relating themselves to the universities of which they are a part and to their

respective governments. It is to the problems of their two constituencies we now turn.

II—INTRA-UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS OF AN APPLIED RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The relationship of an applied social research institute to the "teaching" departments within the university is the most difficult and delicate one it faces. The points of sensitivity are numerous, and, of course, many of these are generic to the institute department relationship in any university in the world where the two structures co-exist. Indeed, Peter Rossi has argued that there is an inherent tension in the teaching-research function:

The evolution of research centers can be seen as one attempt to solve by segregation the tensions between teaching and research: Research Institutes were to be the proper place for research and the departments to remain the proper place for teaching. . . . Within the professional role the tensions are produced partly by the different phasings of the two activities: teaching demands that a set schedule of classes, seminars, etc., be met, while research has variable and unpredictable time demands. In addition, the two activities compete for time: the proper nurture of undergraduate and graduate students can absorb the full-time attention of an instructor, but so can his scholarly activities.⁵

This tension-producing element in the amalgamation of teaching and research in the professional role is also reflected. Rossi argues, in the differing organizational imperatives of the two functions. These differences in organizational imperatives dictate different ethos, which could explain why some institute-based scholars are not effective members of institute research teams and strive for appointments in teaching departments, and why efforts to co-opt or associate some departmental scholars with institute applied research programmes are unsuccessful.

There are other sources of tension between the two functions, which unfortunately tend to be reinforced by structural separation, and can lead, on both sides, to pejorative, and frequently distorted, images of the other. The negative perspective some departmental scholars can have regarding the activities and personnel of an institute include the following:

- (1) A sense of relative deprivation and envy engendered by what they believe to be, rightly or wrongly, the complete or at least substantial, freedom of researchers from teaching obligations, the presumed larger endowment of research-support funds and facilities available to institute staff, and the presumably greater opportunity to publish and accelerate one's professional advancement.
- (2) A fear of intended, potential or actual pre-emption of the research function by the institute and its staff, thus not only threatening the individual departmental scholar's claim to professional legitimacy as

⁵ Various names are given to separately organized research units, of which "Institute", "Centre" and "Bureau" are the most common. Although in many places these are carefully distinguished by both functions and structure—usually by degree of autonomy ("Centre" being parts of "Institutes"), in the nomenclature of new African universities these distinctions have become blurred and the term "Institute" will be used here in a generic sense.

well as the department's sense of corporate identity, but also reducing or extinguishing the visibility of the research output of the department and, therefore, its opportunity to acquire a reputation both locally and internationally as a "strong" department. As universities in developing countries increasingly come to be judged, and some even to judge themselves, in terms of their "relevance" to national development (i.e., relevance becomes the over-riding principle of legitimation), and as some scholars increasingly tend to believe that "relevance" in the social sciences is established by one's visible involvement in and contribution to applied policy-oriented research, the fact that the main claim to functional distinctiveness of institutes is precisely their greater capacity to produce such research, exacerbates the fears of many departmental scholars that they are thereby denied visibility, indeed even legitimacy.

- (3) A contrary belief by a not insignificant number of other departmental scholars (the contradiction with (2) reflects the ambiguity on this issue among scholars) that applied policy-oriented research not only lacks scholarly respectability, but that academic scholarship and the very autonomy of the university can be seriously threatened or compromised by a too intimate, continuous and structured relationship with government. This is a very familiar phenomenon in contemporary university-government relations in many parts of the world. In some new states it is reinforced by strained or indifferent relations between a national university and its government, or, at least, between some leading scholars in the university and the "Government of the Day" or certain leading politicians or administrators in that government. In such situations the desire to preserve the values of scholarly purity and academic freedom is fortified by an understandable reluctance to allow the university to be used to enhance the popularity, success and legitimacy of an incumbent ruling group.
- (4) A deepening feeling among many of those in (3), and others, that the effort to make universities relevant "instruments of development" is misplaced, not only because it tends to be based on a very questionable unilinear, government-initiated-and-guided, and obsessively economic-centric conception of development, but also because it tends to dissipate intellectual energies on cultivating a government-university symbiosis rather than concentrating them on the critical study and resolution of the really fundamental issues of not development, but "underdevelopment". Indeed, some have argued that the concept of universities as "instruments of development", which came to be so uncritically accepted as conventional wisdom during the First Development Decade, comes dangerously close to a surrender of their identity as centres of fundamental thinking and intellectual leadership.
- (5) A conviction that "applied research", when conceived narrowly as short-term "crash programme" analysis or production of position papers produced in response to a specific problem judged collabora-

tively by applied researchers and government administrators as urgent and important, is not "scholarly research", and is not the best investment of the time of academic scholars deeply concerned with problems of national development.

The foregoing elements in the pejorative image some departmental scholars have of research institutes are matched by equally negative reciprocal perspectives on the part of institute researchers regarding departmental personnel. To some extent the views of the institute researchers are reactive, reflecting a defensive awareness of the department perspective. Their defensive posture can well be partly a function of the "identity crisis" some institutes confront. There is something in Rossi's argument that the physical marginality of many university-based research institutes reflects their academic and, one could add, "psychic" marginality. A sense of marginality is not usually conducive to a charitable image of other groups against which affected marginals are juxtaposed. Apart from this, however, there are also significant ways in which institute researchers concerned solely with short-term "applied research" can also suffer rightly or wrongly from a feeling of relative deprivation and frustration. Having their work contemptuously denigrated as "unscholarly", obliged to function within a hierarchical framework, having their research projects significantly determined by persons or processes other than autonomous personal choice, required to be "at work" each full day for eleven months a year, occasionally suffering constraints on their freedom to publish the results of their research, having to meet externally imposed and usually inflexible deadlines—these and other aspects of their role requirements can and do make them envious of the departmentally-based scholar who is almost totally unsupervised and undirected in his work, who can enjoy each year up to four or five months freedom from teaching and university obligations to pursue—or, once he has tenure (which comes after two years) not to pursue—research of his own choosing, with no deadlines imposed other than his own, and who publishes whatever he wants, if a publisher will take it, and if the laws of the state allow. An applied researcher's feeling of relative deprivation and exploitation is further aggravated in those situations where he is also obliged to contribute heavily to a departmental teaching programme, frequently on a subject and at a time not of his own choosing, thereby compromising his capacity to consummate his assigned research on schedule. The obligation becomes all the more psychically oppressive when he is led to believe, rightly or wrongly, that the net effect of his teaching contribution is to provide further diffuse relief to departmental personnel to pursue what he judges, again rightly or wrongly, to be largely irrelevant or undistinguished research, or, even worse, greater leisure.

Another aspect of the problem of departmental-institute relationships is how to strike a balance between the institute's own functional need for a corporate identity (including internal arrangements for programme definition, allocation of scarce available resources to ensure delivery of the research product, recruitment of personnel to urgently required specializations, etc.) and meaningful departmental participation in the institute's activities, includ-

ing programme definition, resource allocation, and personnel recruitment. One vexing question is *which* departments are or should be concerned with applied social research. Most would agree upon the so-called core social science disciplines (economics, sociology (including non-physical anthropology) and political science). The social and behavioural dimensions of geography (excluding physical geography), history (excluding archaeology), psychology (excluding physiological psychology) are also involved as well as certain aspects of linguistics, mathematics, statistics and computation. Professional studies in business administration, education, journalism, law, community medicine and public health and social work have developed significant social research activities. Moreover, as the authors of one recent symposium stress, "much research that is relevant to understanding modern life requires collaboration among social scientists, physical and life scientists, engineers and others.⁶ Given the lack of consensus on what constitutes the social sciences, and the fuzziness of the boundaries once we leave the central core disciplines, the problem of defining and rationalizing the identity of an applied social research institute, *by discipline*, is very evident.

There are those who argue that to define the identity and rationale of a research institute according to a specified set of disciplines seriously weakens, if not extinguishes, the justification for its independent existence. The argument is that corporate identity can really be established and maintained only by a recognized functional distinctiveness. The latter is possible only under two conditions:

- (a) The existence, or potentiality for development, in an institute of a demonstrable capacity to perform an important university function either that the disciplinary departments most directly concerned cannot or do not wish to perform, or that the institute can perform significantly more effectively. This, so the argument goes, is the explicitly applied social research function. It follows that if the university judges this not to be an important or appropriate university function, then the rationale for a separate institute ceases to exist.
- (b) The definition of the programme of the institute not in terms of a specific set of disciplines, but in terms of major problem areas in development cross-cutting a wide spectrum of disciplines, including the professional faculties.

The crux of the above argument is that a university institute loses its rationale if it is or appears to be nothing more than a structural appendage to support the full spectrum of idiosyncratic and unrelated research interests of all the members of a particular small group of disciplinary departments. The realities of the internal politics of resource allocation within the university make it most unlikely that the numerous other clusters of university depart-

6 Peter H. Rossi, "Researchers, Scholars and Policy Makers: The Politics of Large Scale Research", in Robert S. Morison (ed.), *The Contemporary University: U.S.A.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), pp. 111-112. Rossi, in my view, vastly overstates his argument, but the insight it sheds deserves illumination.

ments, which could similarly argue for *their own* institute, would support such preferential treatment.

It is not only the discipline-related departments with which an applied research institute must negotiate a tolerable working relationship; it must also struggle from a very weak marginal position to justify its existence in the perceptions of other departments and faculties in the university, and particularly among the humanities and arts departments into which the social sciences have tended to be grouped in the inherited omnibus "Faculty of Arts" tradition. Beyond these close neighbours are the hard sciences and the professional faculties which understandably sometimes find it difficult to comprehend the rationale for investing scarce university resources in an applied social research institute in the face of desperately needed research laboratories and equipment. The obstacle all of this can pose to progressive institutionalization (as measured by the allocation of positions on the permanent university establishment and financial infrastructural support on the recurrent university budget) is readily apparent.

The foregoing inventory of the internal problems encountered by a university research institute tends to exaggerate the negative aspects of the actual situation in most universities. However, it does raise the question of what alternative exists within the university. Some have argued that the applied research function should be assigned to the conventional academic departments and faculties. The department was the base for applied economic research in Ghana, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi before their university institutes were established, and it is still the dominant pattern in most other social science disciplines. However, others argue that the requisites of applied social research, as well as experience, dictate a separate structure of a university institute type. They reason that it is the only institutional arrangement within a university which will ensure: (a) systematic and continuous monitoring, identification, and specification of priorities among the many urgent problems for which greater social scientific knowledge and analysis is required; (b) the requisite continuing full-time leadership and concentration and organization of energy and skills of specialists upon the particular national development problems identified as urgent; (c) integrated interdisciplinary teamwork; and (d) continuity in the availability and application of resources to achieve the research objective on time in order for the research product to be communicable and *usable* by national planners and policy-makers.

Assuming the validity of these requisites, it is further argued that if regular teaching departments were to assume responsibility for the added function of producing *on time* a continuous flow of research findings and analysis immediately applicable to urgent problems of national development, the following would be the likely consequences: (a) the needed research product would not be delivered in the quantity, with the quality and on the deadline required to be of any use in planning or in policy decisions; (b) the credibility of the university as a relevant, predictably responsive and productive national institution—at least in the realm of policy-relevant, applicable research—would

be either doubted or non-existent; and, most serious of all; (c) the primary function of the academic departments, i.e., teaching, would grievously suffer. Experience has also shown, they claim, that separate institutes have greater advantages in cultivating and focusing, and becoming the point of contact and channel of communication for, the expression of government interest in and need for applied socio-economic research. Moreover, it is also argued that they have also been a more effective device for obtaining and administering research funds supplementary to ordinary local subventions.⁷

Apart from these considerations, policy-oriented applicable research requires interdisciplinary collaboration, and a multi-disciplinary research institute is manifestly more effective than unidisciplinary departments for ensuring this result.

Most of the critical problems of national development in new (and old) states—urban unemployment, rural development, water development, resource allocation and distribution—require the insights of more than one, if not all, of the social sciences, as well as many of the professions, if sound comprehensive policy and plans are to be made. Institutes can be structures which maximize the effectiveness of concentrated interdisciplinary "collective thinking" and interaction.

If the foregoing rationale for a university-based institute is accepted, then the first step in coping with the intra-university tensions previously described is to recognize that tension is inherent in any multi-functional organization, and that specific conscious initiatives must be taken to develop structural and working arrangements which can reduce such dysfunctional tension. Most of the new African universities which have established institutes are continuously exploring and experimenting with a variety of new arrangements. There is clearly no single structural formula which will ensure success; each university—its ethos and internal political system as well as its relationship with its government—is in a large measure *sui generis*. Among the ameliorative arrangements which have been tried or which might be considered are the following:

- (1) A closer and more effectively structured integration of representatives from relevant departments and professional faculties in the decision-making organs of the institute.
- (2) A far greater participation by departmentally-based scholars in the research programme of the institute, to include equal access to the institute's research facilities and available support if their projects are "applied" or "developmental" in broad conception and fall within the research programme of the institute as approved by a governing board on which departments are represented. One formula would be for departmental scholars to become institute "fellows", released from teaching obligations for a term or a year, to carry out specific research projects. In this connexion it should be noted that one university is

⁷ Peter H. Rossi, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

currently experimenting informally with a scheme whereby institute research fellows will serve for a year in the department with a full-time teaching load and an equal number of departmental scholars will work full-time in the institute as research fellows on specific projects. Once teaching departments in a university become nearly or fully staffed with local citizens some sort of formula along these lines ought to be pursued. However, this does raise a very fundamental issue whether anyone within a university should be given a permanent appointment to a research position, or whether, alternatively, establishment positions in an institute should be used to rotate scholars between departments and the institute. On this issue there is obviously very lively controversy.

(3) The development of structural and decision-making arrangements to ensure that the research programme of the institute will be one not limited to or dominated by the narrow "service station" concept of short-term applied research, but will include a significant component of longer-range research on major developmental problems for which an immediate solution is neither expected nor demanded.

(4) The assumption by the institute, at the request of, or in collaboration and co-sponsorship with the departments, of training programmes in particular skills which only supplement and in no way duplicate or conflict with the traditional teaching fields of the departments. What comes immediately to mind is departmental exploitation for the benefit of their students of a fairly substantial survey research capability, an institute necessarily has to establish to carry out its applied research programme. Here one can think of a variety of package training programmes to enhance the technical research skills of students undertaking long-vacation research or other projects. Another example is a proposal currently under consideration in Kenya to train a group of new university graduates in rural development planning, research and evaluation. The object would be to obtain the requisite financing to appoint twelve Kenyans as "post-graduate research trainees" (or some other suitable title) and give them a year of training which would include two months of seminars and instruction, five months of research and evaluation with senior institute staff, and five months of practical planning experience as temporary planning assistants attached to Provincial Economist Planners.

The foregoing are only a few of the several likely possibilities which might be explored and experimented with if it is the desire of a university to have an applied research institute as an integral part of its establishment. However, if in the end a tolerable pattern of effective working relationships within a university cannot be achieved then there would seem to be only two alternatives for the development of the requisite applied research capability, i.e., in an institute independent and outside of the university as in the case of NISER in Ibadan, or within the government.

III—THE UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIP

The second constituency of a university-based applied research institute is the national government. The effectiveness of the institute-government relationship is a function of many factors, including both the general nature of university-government relations in the country concerned, as well as the specific arrangements for, and the respective degrees of government and university authority in determining the institute's research programme. It is difficult to generalize about the nature of university-government relations in new states not only because of the brevity of independent statehood but also because the universities themselves—still in many instances artificial expatriate-dominant enclaves—are only beginning to become institutionalized in the national societies they serve. The relationship in any event tends to be *sui generis*, determined as it is in each case by a complex of unique historical factors as well as by the interaction of leading national personalities and groups. The university-government relationships in Tanzania and Uganda since independence illuminate the range of variations; in the former, working links tended to be close, which partly explains the comparative effectiveness of the University's two applied research bureaus; in the latter, the relationship tended to be rather more distant and occasionally strained, which fact obviously affected the functioning and the status of the Makerere Institute of Social Research. Yet, in both countries, as elsewhere, the relationship is still in the process of being defined. There can be little doubt, however, that the decisive factor in determining the closeness and the effectiveness of the relationship will be the degree of consensus regarding national values and developmental strategy and goals among political and bureaucratic elites on the one hand and university scholars on the other.

The most practically relevant dimension of the institute-government relationship is the link between research producers in the institutes and the direct research users in government agencies. Sutton suggested in 1961 that the first wave of African administrators were trained in the images of their colonial predecessors, and "such training has not been specially conducive to recourse to research".⁸ However, during the first decade of independence there have been numerous instances of rapid conversion to a receptivity to and strong support and full exploitation of social scientific research and analysis, whether based "in-house" or in a university institute. The process has undoubtedly been furthered by the presence during the initial post-colonial period of expatriate social scientist advisers in government ministries who have served as interpreters and communicators of social research findings. Yet, there has been and in some cases continues to be, a basic artificiality about the research producer-research user relationship; it has been and is one largely of expatriate social scientists in institutes serving expatriate social scientists in government ministries. It is still too early to determine whether a continuing and effective relationship between the roles of institute researcher and govern-

⁸ National Academy of Sciences, *The Behavioural and Social Sciences* (Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 19.

ment user has anywhere become firmly institutionalized. Perhaps in the final analysis, the crucial determinant—far more than any structural arrangement—will be the personal as well as the professional relationships and degree of mutual confidence and respect between the producers in research institutes and the users in governments.

Institute-government relationships have tended to be closest and most effective in those situations and periods of acute need for urgent policy guidance by government. These have usually been associated with a dramatic phase in a country's development (e.g., nationalizations) when existing "in-house" or other social scientific resources were inadequate or lacking and when institute and co-opted staff have been called upon and have been able to respond. Once again, it is too early in the evolution of the relationship to conclude whether these "crisis" experiences leave residues of confidence and credibility which cumulate over time and slowly build up into a less intermittent and more routinized relationship. Much depends upon the determination and ability of governments to develop a solid and permanent research capability in the ministries themselves. This has actually occurred in the research division of the Banque Nationale du Congo, which has become the centre of gravity for short-term economic research, with IRES at Lovanium working on longer-term problems. There is clearly a basis for a functional division of labour and this may suggest a more generalized pattern for the future.

The effectiveness of the institute-government relationship is also determined by the centrality and coherence of the planning and policy-making process in government itself. In the initial stages of post-independence development there tended to be considerable centralization, and institutes related primarily to planning and finance ministries. As development occurs there seems to be an inherent strain toward greater fragmentation and pluralism within governments. This results in a proliferation of points of initiative and requests from government to research institutes. And it means that institutes must adapt to the changing pattern of concentration and dispersion in their points of contact with government. The fact that changes continuously occur within government structure and among key government personnel does create problems in the institute-government relationship, particularly when the institute gets caught in the cross-fire or competition for research products among two or more ministries in the same policy area.

In addition to the foregoing general considerations there are several specific issue areas in the government-institute relationship which centre upon what will be the content of the institute's research programme and how and by whom will it be determined. It was earlier noted that types of problem-oriented research range from specific, short-term problem research requested by users to basic (long-or middle-range) objective research on "problem areas" in development autonomously initiated and conducted by the researchers or his institute. These two types, and an intermediate pattern of "co-determination", are set forth in Table 2, together with six key issues, decisions on which are central to the institute-government relationship.

The first issue concerns the kind of research (i.e., the nature and range of problems) which a university-based institute should seek to encompass within its programme. Most existing institutes include varying mixes of both Type A and Type C, although their major emphasis is upon the latter (i.e., institute-determined, basic "problem area" (research). Most of the arguments for and against inclusion of Type A (government-determined specific problem research) were examined earlier in our discussion of the rationale for a university-based institute. Arguments favouring the inclusion of a mix of both Type A and Type C research in an institute programme include (1) in situations of acute financial and skill scarcity a new nation cannot duplicate concentrations of intellectual resources; (2) scholars working on basic long-term "problem area" research are manifestly the most qualified also to direct their attention as needed to specific short-term policy problems facing governments which arise within those areas; and (3) the performance of this service function not only demonstrates the university's "relevance" to the nation, but it also serves crucially to legitimate and secure continuing financing for the longer-term, basic "problem-area" research component of the institute's programme, desired and preferred by its scholars. The counter-arguments are that conduct of Type A research most appropriately belongs within government ministries; tends to devour the time and energies of institute researchers, thereby compromising their ability to conduct more basic research; tends to make an institute a mere "service station" to government, thereby undermining its sense of corporate purpose and identity, not to mention the intellectual autonomy of its members; and raises serious questions of professional ethics and involvement in regime legitimation, thereby compromising scholarly objectivity and freedom for critical analysis. These and other arguments are made in support of the case for confining an institute's programme only to Type C research.

The compromise arrangement most usually sought in this structured situation of conflicting professional, organizational and functional imperatives is a pattern of institute-government co-determination of the Type A component of the institute's research programme, with the institute retaining the final decision regarding its capacity to undertake any particular research project, as well as corporate autonomy in initiating and carrying out any longer-term basic "problem area" research it decides is significant. Experience has demonstrated that it is extremely difficult—perhaps in the long run impossible—to find a working formula whereby an institute can carry on the two types of research to the mutual satisfaction of government users and academic scholars. One mechanism—perhaps the most effective one—for structuring the process of co-determination of an institute's programme is the establishment of a governing board, or at least a research programme committee, on which both university and government have representation. This is the pattern which prevails in EDI in Nigeria, ISSER in Ghana, and ERB and BRALUP in Tanzania (see Table 1). Where such an arrangement for co-determination of an institute's programme does not exist governments tend to be more critical of or indifferent to the institutes and their activities, an attitude which is not

Table 2—TYPES OF APPLIED PROBLEM-ORIENTED SOCIAL RESEARCH

Key Decisions	A Government Determined	B Co-Determination	C Institute Determined
I. Nature of Problem	Concrete-Specific	Concrete-Specific and Basic-Generic	Basic-Generic
II. Initiation of Research	Government Requested	Co-Initiation by Govt. and Inst.	Institute Initiated
III. Research Priority Specification	Government Specified	Co-Determination of Research Priorities by Govt. and Inst.	Institute Determined
IV. Duration and Deadlines	Short-Term Prescribed Deadline	Short or Long-Term; Deadline Institute Imposed	Medium-Long Term; No Deadline
V. Publications Constraints	Publication as and when Authorized by Govt.	None; Although Voluntary Delay at Institute Discretion	None
VI. Action Involvement	Involvement Unavoidable and Expected	Involvement as Required and at Discretion of Institute	Involvement Explicitly Avoided

ameliorated by the device of a mere advisory committee. The creation and effective functioning of such joint governing bodies requires the initial engagement and continuous involvement of the highest leadership in government concerned with development planning, as well as the top leadership in the university, both of which recognize the appropriateness of a university base for the applied social research function. Where this is lacking—i.e., where it does not have the collaborative support of both of its constituents—an institute cannot effectively mix both types of research; indeed, it probably cannot and should not survive.

Assuming a tolerably effective pattern of co-determination of an institute's research programme is established, including mutually agreed criteria and procedure for identifying research priorities as regards both short-term specific problems and longer-term "problem areas", there remain two issue areas in which conflicting imperatives can frustrate the whole collaborative effort. One concerns the freedom of the research scholar to publish his results. Whereas some government representatives tend to err on the side of excessive secrecy, as well as an insensitivity to the extreme importance most scholars attach to the freedom to publish in terms of both intellectual integrity and professional recognition, on their side, some scholars tend to be unreasonably purist in their insistence on the sovereign right of publication, and insensitive to valid "reasons of state" which could make immediate and full publication of research results either imprudent or exacerbating of the very policy problem on which the research was intended to provide enlightenment. There is no special structural arrangement nor other formula for resolving this basic issue; only sensitivity, flexibility and understanding among research producers and users alike will make a mutually acceptable arrangement possible.

The second vexing issue area which generates considerable controversy is the extent to which really effective utilization and application of social research findings—which after all is the object of the entire exercise—requires the continuing participation of the researcher in follow up. As the Committee on Social Studies in the United Kingdom observed:

In the physical sciences the translation of research findings into practical applications is the function of the specially trained development scientist or engineer, who understands both the relevant scientific discipline and the technology of the establishment in which he is employed. In the social sciences, even when allowance is made for the difference in the nature of applied research, there are few people whose functions correspond to the engineering of development function in the physical sciences, and nowhere are such people trained.⁹

The implication of this fact is that inexorably the applied social researcher tends to be drawn into an action role in policy making and administration in the interpretation and "application" of the findings of his research. This strain or pressure toward action involvement raises to an intolerably acute form the ethical problems of the applied social scientist. There can be little doubt that the least developed dimension of the whole applied social research enterprise is the process whereby research gets translated into action. By default, all too frequently it is either not utilized at all, or the researcher himself must become involved in policy action.

IV—THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Everywhere university-based applied social research institutes have been established and supported during their initial stages of development largely, if not entirely, by external funds and technical assistance. There are many reasons for this, but the decisive one is the primacy and priority accorded the development of other aspects of the university in the allocation of local resources. It has meant, however, that the process of institutionalization has been, and in some cases continues to be, exceedingly slow and uncertain. A few of the reasons for this will be noted below, but the predominance of external funding and expatriate leadership and presence in the inception, and frequently the conception, of such an organized activity tends itself to create perspectives and expectations of indefinite continuation that are difficult to alter.

By institutionalization we mean that the applied social research function—and the structure through which it is performed—becomes a valued activity, perceived and respected by nationals of the country as an integral and enduring part of the university and society concerned, as reflected in the allocation of funds from recurrent local budgets for support of basic administrative overhead expenses and a core complement of permanent establishment positions to which indigenous scholars can be given career appointments. Apart from the psychic drag in absorbing an activity once launched largely or

⁹ Hugues Leclercq and Robert L. West, "Economic Research and Development in Tropical Africa", *Social Research*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn, 1965), p. 306.

entirely by external funds, special problems are encountered in efforts to accelerate the institutionalization process. The most critical one is undoubtedly the politically weak and marginal position held by a research institute in the power structure and political process of the university. The predominance of external funding and expatriate staff heightens an institute's vulnerability and marginality, and further reduces its political position vis-à-vis both the university and government. Pending institutionalization and Africanization this disability can only be overcome by strong and continuous support from top academic and administrative leadership in the university, and, if necessary, in the government itself. Without such support, and left to fend for itself within the normal university political process, an institute can and probably will wither on the vine.

When a distinguished economist visited East Africa in 1967 and was shown the staff list of one of the East African institutes his first question was "where are the Africans?" This observation goes to the heart of the matter of institutionalization. There has been quite a change since then, but Africanization has been and remains a very slow and painful process. There are at least two simple explanations for this. One has been the absence until recently of permanent establishment positions to which African scholars could be appointed. This reveals the circular nature of the problem—until an institute has permanent African staff who can work within the university system to secure the allocation of permanent establishment positions it cannot attract African scholars to its establishment! The proof of the existence of this simple barrier has been that where they have been available, African scholars have been appointed to and have accepted every establishment position that has been allocated. In the absence of such positions, those that have accepted appointment to institute contract posts financed by external funds have endeavoured—usually from the moment of their appointment—to transfer to other posts in teaching departments or in the government where permanent terms were available. Indeed, until establishment positions were allocated to institutes they served essentially as a recruitment agency and way station for others.

The second main obstacle has been the overpowering attraction of other career paths for the first wave of African scholars qualified for appointment to a research position. For example, among the first three Congolese social scientists associated with IRES, two are now Vice-Ministers in the Congo Government, and a third is Director of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. Again, among the first four Kenyan social scientists who held two-year research fellow appointments in IDS under external funds, one is now a Minister in the Kenya Government, two are senior lecturers on permanent terms in the Department of Economics, and the fourth holds a high position in the Central Bank of Kenya.

Institutionalization of an activity is a slow and delicate process in any society. The new universities in Africa, like the new states themselves, are in the midst of establishing their own identities and determining what activities and structures inherited from an earlier period are to be continued, adapted

and made an integral part of the institutional fabric of their new national societies. Whether the applied social research function will—or should—remain university-based, or will be developed outside the university, continues to be very much an open question. Institutes established with universities to perform that function inescapably are at the centre of a great, and very healthy, debate, namely, how can universities demonstrate their relevance in national development (and what is "relevance"; indeed, what is "development"?) and at the same time preserve the necessary autonomy to perform their historically distinctive, and far more crucial, function of fundamental thinking, objective study and critical analysis of the national societies whose development is being sought.