

S S R C W O R K I N G P A P E R S E R I E S

**International Scholarly
Collaboration:
Lessons From the Past**

**A Report of the Social Science Research Council
Inter-regional Working Group on International Scholarly Collaboration**

V O L .



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Why Collaborate?

SCHOLARLY collaboration is not a new activity. It is embedded in the institutional framework of modern research universities, implicit in the acknowledgments of every scholarly monograph, and takes place all the time, across all kinds of boundaries. Yet we are a long way from understanding the range of phenomena captured by the term “scholarly collaboration” in a systematic way. If, as most observers expect,¹ the scale and extent of international scholarly collaboration will increase substantially in the future, then a fuller understanding of collaboration as a field of social action is long overdue. This report is the result of a collective step toward that end.

The best kinds of collaboration promise rewards far beyond the abilities of single researchers working in isolation. Collaboration is a necessary means to overcoming the tendency towards increased specialization and of addressing problems that cross political boundaries. Collaboration sets the stage for the synergies of small groups working together and allows for insights and understandings that cannot be predicted. Most important, collaboration allows the nature of the problem being discussed to enlarge itself beyond the formulations of a single individual constrained by discipline, coming much closer to the multidimensional character of most social problems. Studies of the environment are an obvious case in point: to understand the impact of acid rain across national borders, for example, we need to call on the expertise of atmospheric scientists, zoologists, anthropologists, marine biologists, international relations scholars, lawyers, and probably others. But how will these experts speak to each other? Who will translate the concerns and norms of one expert into the problem set of the other(s)? Once they find a common language, how will they approach the task of framing a common question, let alone answering it? Will we end up with as many analyses as there are analysts, leaving still open the question of synthesis? Understanding collaboration better allows us to get closer to understanding what allows for true interdisciplinarity, a scholarly objective that is paid much lip-service but is rarely ever made manifest.

This report begins with the assertion that it is easier to call for more and better forms of international collaboration than it is to design them. It is the belief of this working group that good design is helped by a better understanding of what collaboration is, how it has been done, and how it has been done well. Hence, the objective of this report—to apply the insights of social research to the question of collaboration so as to help reduce the transactional, financial, ethical, and emotional costs of international linkages and exchange.

¹ UNESCO, “Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education” (Paris: UNESCO, 1995); OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, “Internationalisation of Higher Education” (Paris: OECD, 1996).

Knowledge about Collaboration

EVIDENCE about successful collaborative ventures tends to be tacit. While collaboration happens all the time, is referred to in a variety of ways, and is increasingly assumed to be necessary for so much of what we do, collaborative work in the social sciences has only rarely been subjected to systematic inquiry.² Even in the physical sciences, where collaboration tends to be far more explicit and everyday, there is little reflexive understanding of what makes collaboration work and how it is sustained.³ It is usually just taken as a feature of scholarly interaction, like the test tubes and instruments that litter the work tables of most laboratories. Given the way that the histories of science are written, we are more likely to be informed about the great discoveries made by individual scientists than we are to know about the team efforts that cracked major physical and biological problems.⁴ In fact it could be argued that we are much more familiar with collaboration stories that mark failure—whether between scholars and scientists, donor agencies and NGOs, agronomists and farmers. Marginal notes in the files of these interactions are replete with signs of project breakdown, miscommunication, covert and overt hostilities, and unequal exchange. So, at one level, this report seeks to make the implicit explicit.

In defining its analytic strategy, the working group agreed that it would adopt a comparative case study approach. The report would proceed by understanding and comparing specific cases of international research collaboration, further limiting itself to projects deemed relatively *successful*⁵ by those within and without the project. Three constraints were fundamental in the choice of cases, addressing what the group saw as the biggest problems facing a better understanding of scholarly collaboration. Projects had to be research projects in the social sciences and humanities, they had to be international, and they had to be principally between researchers and institutions from the North and the South.

Pitched at its most general level, the issue of international collaboration raises the oldest problem in social theory, namely, the search for the rules that allow people to work together in harmony and under conditions of equality. The fact that there is still no consensus about this question should give us pause. Working toward better and more effective scholarly collaboration is difficult. The beneficiaries of a better understanding of this process are, however, much broader than the scholarly community and include NGOs, donors, and governments.

² A notable exception is Joske F.G. Bunders and Chandan Mukerjee, "North-South Research Partnerships: Redressing the Imbalance," paper presented at European Conference of Research Partnerships for Sustainable Development, Leiden, March 11-13, 1997.

³ Derek J. de Solla Price, *Little Science, Big Science--And Beyond* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

⁴ Two exceptions worth noting are the story of how the DNA structure was discovered by Watson and Crick, possibly one of the most widely read popular science accounts of the past century, and the many accounts of the Manhattan Project. See James D. Watson, *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Discovery of the Structure of DNA* (New York: Atheneum, 1968) and Daniel J. Kevles, *The Physicists: The History of a Scientific Community in Modern America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). A good example of this narrative tension can be found even in an atypical study of science in action, Paul Rabinow, *Making PCR: A Story of Biotechnology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

⁵ The report discusses "success" below.

North-South Issues

COMING to terms with the institutional constraints embedded in the issue of international scholarly collaboration is not easy.⁶ When collaborators come from the North and the South, the problems multiply. Setting aside the considerable question of language as beyond the scope of this report,⁷ the most obvious constraints are the vast differences in material resources available to scholars and researchers from different parts of the world. In developed countries, even junior scholars need never question the availability of current journals, 24-hour electronic mail access, and vast library holdings.⁸ Most simply, they can also expect to live off their university salaries. None of these conditions are necessarily true for scholars either from the Third World or the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. These unequal conditions alter fundamentally the nature of interaction between scholars from different world regions. Economically vulnerable scholars are often forced to engage in international collaboration for financial reasons. Even senior scholars from developing countries in some cases find themselves working as research assistants in order to supplement their meager official incomes—an enormous social waste of that talent.

Unequal material conditions impinge on the kind of research questions that are proposed. When scholars from developed countries go abroad looking for partners to work with, they typically come with research grants from their home institutions or national research organizations. Both the substance of the questions being proposed and the research paradigms being utilized often bear the stamp of priorities deemed relevant in far-away places, priorities not always compatible with local scholarship and concerns. A collaborator brought into a project after the principal research questions have been framed and funding received is not in a position to question the premises of the project. She must either accept the role of what often ends up being a native informant or chose not to be a part of the project at all, something that is not always feasible for the reasons outlined above. It should be noted that even when collaborations take place between countries of the South, a rare but not uncommon phenomenon, issues related to different scholarly and institutional priorities and inequalities in agenda setting emerge. This report does not consider that category of collaboration, due to the desire to focus on the more common phenomenon of North-South relationships.⁹

A different order of problems arises because of institutional conditions specific to certain set-

⁶ For a similar review of the issues constraining medical research between scientists from North and South, see Ivan Wolffers, Sam Adjei, and Roy van der Drift, "Health Research in the Tropics," *Lancet* 351, no. 9116 (1998): 1652-1654.

⁷ We refer to both natural language and the languages of the social sciences.

⁸ It is often argued that the information technology (IT) revolution might help to ameliorate unequal access to infrastructural resources available to scholars from different countries. While not discounting this possibility, the working group remains doubtful about the extent of the transformation possible in the poorer developing countries, given structural weaknesses in their political economy. A more extensive discussion of IT issues is unfortunately beyond the scope of this report.

⁹ It is worth noting that there are few occasions for collaborations between personnel drawn from more than two developing countries. The Dutch government-sponsored program Sephis, which explicitly seeks to promote multilateral South-South connections, is one of the notable exceptions. Yet in spite of this, two major intellectual movements of the last 50 years could be said to have emerged out of South-South regional collaboration, i.e., dependency theory and subaltern studies.

tings. For example, after a collaborative work has been completed, the relative importance of the researchers continues to be in question. In many countries, the academic reward system is predicated on acknowledging the work of a single individual. The researcher based in a developed country, looking for tenure or promotion, is thus under institutional pressures not to collaborate with other scholars, or even, sometimes, not to acknowledge the help of others. For example, in the US, single-author PhD dissertations are the norm in the social sciences, yet in practice this early work is often heavily reliant on the support and help of others. Yet it is not inconceivable that a better product might have been possible if the work had been explicitly conducted jointly from the beginning. We know that even in the most individualized of settings, collaboration does take place. What is at stake is to be able to call it such, and not face sanctions for it.

Features of Successful Collaboration

THE material differences between Northern and Southern researchers, of which anecdotal and empirical evidence is overwhelming, affect immediately what might have been thought to be a simple question: how to define success in research collaboration. Success in most research is usually defined as answering important questions via the creation of new knowledge or the recasting of known findings. In rare cases, the knowledge produced or the particular approach taken leads even to the creation of new fields of research. In considering the class of problems this group was concerned with, this kind of definition seemed too narrow. On the one hand, we knew that location matters, in that different communities of scholars might not agree on the relative importance of research problems; and, on the other, that inequality matters, in that this definition of success ignores underlying inequalities in the practice of research. Putting location and inequality together pointed to the importance of scrutinizing the setting of the research agenda and following the process of knowledge production in the cases the group would examine.

As a result, two criteria were used for success, with the full awareness that they could lead to contradictory results in some cases. The first measure of success related to knowledge production, the second to capacity building. For international research collaboration to be successful it was felt that a necessary condition to be met was the creation of common vocabularies or conceptual bridges that allowed for new ways of thinking or new combinations of existing thought. Hence, collaboration always involved a literal encounter or recognized the influence of ideas from more than one place. Extending this condition created an additional one: that the final product would not exist in this form if not for the encounter.

In order to complicate our conception of success, and to foreground the long-term implications of international collaboration, the working group agreed that it was critical also to recognize the

importance of building and retaining research capacity within collaborating institutions and personnel in the South. This concern is driven by a phenomenon often noted that, following a successful North-South collaboration, one or more of the developing country individuals involved is invited to move to another institution, or another country, at a higher salary and better working conditions. The effect of this individually rational decision is to remove embodied skills and expertise from the original institution. A further problem is noted when, following successful international collaboration, the Southern scholars involved find it difficult to reintegrate themselves into their prior disciplinary settings, because they have reinforced their own tendencies toward interdisciplinary modes of analysis. Ironically, hence, following successful collaboration Southern partner institutions sometimes become qualitatively weaker due to the loss or marginalization of this "human capital." Hence, it is necessary to define the outcome of the collaboration by paying attention to both scholarly output and institutional impact. In short, we argue that the best kinds of collaboration should seek to produce new knowledge (theoretical and empirical findings in the sense referred to above) and add to absorptive capacity or build new research capacity.

Having said this, we must note that there is no universally accepted standard for studying or measuring scholarly collaboration. Most typical is the use of bibliometric citation studies using multiple authorship as a measure of collaboration.¹⁰ This kind of analysis usually looks at publications in the physical and life sciences, though there is some work based on social science data.¹¹ Far less common, however, is research that takes international collaboration between North and South as its focus. The problem with bibliometric studies, however, is that they provide no evidence relevant to the kinds of questions the group wanted to find answers to—how a project took shape, why it succeeded, and so on. However, in order to get some sense of overall trends and to see what the quantitative data offered, we examined two years' data from the social science citation index (SSCI).¹² We found that while the absolute number of jointly written articles (the measure of collaboration) has increased in recent years, the proportion of international collaborations to all collaborations declined between 1985 and 1995. Economics and psychology, the social science disciplines that have internalized the patterns of interaction of physical sciences most thoroughly, had the highest proportion of collaboration.¹³ We cannot make too much of these findings, given the limitations of the index. At best, it reinforces the need to explore the question of international collaboration more deeply using other methods.

¹⁰ Goran Mellin and Olle Persson, "Studying Research Collaboration Using Co-authorships," *Scientometrics* 36, no. 3 (1996): 363-365.

¹¹ For instance, see James W. Endersby, "Collaborative Research in the Social Sciences: Multiple Authorship and Publication Credit," *Social Science Quarterly* 77, no. 2, (June 1996): 375-387. This study uses publication data from 12 US journals in the social sciences and history.

¹² Itty Abraham and Tina Harris, "Measuring International Collaboration," *Items & Issues* 1, no. 1 (winter 2000): 6-8. An expanded version of the article appears on p. 11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14

Case Selection and Design

THE group prepared a general list of features of collaboration, built around specific research questions, to help guide their studies. These features were oriented toward collecting all the relevant facts of the cases; the data collected would provide the basis for making interpretive judgments about the success and causes for success of particular projects. They included:

- Agenda Setting: When and where was the project conceived? Who was present at the conception? How relevant to local conditions was the project and research design?
- Goals: What were the implicit and explicit goals of the project? Did those goals change over time? Did all participants have the same goals?
- Personnel: Who was involved in the project? At what stage were they brought in? What responsibility did they have?
- Process: What happened? How long did the project take? Is a consistent narrative reconstruction of the process possible?
- Institutional Structure: What was the institutional structure within which the project took place? Did new structures have to be created? Were Southern institutions strengthened?
- Who Pays? Where did the funding for the project come from? What were the conditions, if any, of donor agencies? Do the donors see the project as a success?
- Results: What were the reasons for success (and failure)? Do all participants agree about the results? Were the results equally productive on both criteria of success?

It was understood that notwithstanding the common features outlined above, case study authors would have a considerable degree of freedom to weight their accounts and choose forms of presentation that best suited the stories they wanted to tell. Narrative accounts were encouraged, built around extensive interview data, while placing personal recollections in proper institutional context.

In recognition of the fact that in most parts of the world national governments are the leading sponsors of scholarly research, our case selection had to recognize the importance of externally determined parameters within which collaboration took place, while at the same time ensuring sufficient geographic coverage. Based on the experience of working group participants, four cases seemed to fit this bill yet provided enough variation for useful comparison. The cases can be seen as varying by geographic location and on the degree to which government agencies are involved (from high to low or not at all). The cases also range from the "hard" social sciences (albeit in an interdisciplinary mode) to the humanities, which are rarely considered to have any collaboration at all. It should be noted that this selection does not by any means exhaust all the possibilities of international collaboration, but merely represents the limits of feasibility for this project.

The cases chosen were:

- (a) Government to Government:
The Indo-Dutch program Alternatives in Development (IDPAD)
- (b) Government to Institution/Individual Researcher:
The Nordic Africa Institute's (NAI) project on the impact of structural adjustment in Africa
- (c) Private, Institutionally Located:
Joint Committee on Latin American Studies (JCLAS) of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies
- (d) Private, Individual Researcher-led:
Regional Literatures of South Asia.

Thematic Connections

THIS section is not a conclusion in the traditional sense of that term, which typically means to the reader, "go no further." It is better thought of as a partial cross-section of the case studies that follow, highlighting some areas of commonality, while also drawing attention to the real differences that the cases point to. The case reports are ends in themselves: each necessarily takes a slightly different perspective in order to remain true to the conditions it describes, giving different weights to certain features and not others; together they provide an all-too-rare narrative of the institutional sociology of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities and offer a wealth of information and insight that this overview does not try to capture.

The case studies point, in varying ways, to the importance of institutional structures in shaping the outcomes of collaborative projects. For instance, in a period when Latin American intellectuals were rightly suspicious of US interests in the region, the JCLAS was able to continue to produce important work in the social sciences and humanities. This was in large measure due to the trust that had built up between cohorts of scholars that collaborated with each other, a trust that could not have been engendered in the absence of buffers (autonomy in decision-making, staff insulation) between the institution supporting these initiatives and the activities of the joint committee itself. Likewise, the efforts made by the NAI to include African scholars from the inception of the program in the definition of the projects to be carried out played no small part in the success of this initiative. However, this feature was in turn dependent on the NAI structure, where, once the decision to initiate a project on structural adjustment in Africa was taken, the project director was given a great deal of latitude

in shaping the program, subject to periodic reviews. In the opposite direction, when supporting institutions underwent considerable change at the highest levels and bureaucrats rather than scholars took on a greater responsibility in shaping the agenda for research, as in the latter phases of the IDPAD, the quality of the work produced under the auspices of this program began to suffer. Another way of putting this is the lack of insulation between scholars and bureaucrats in IDPAD led over time to a growing divergence between core social science problems, as they were locally defined, and the thematic priorities of the program. In all cases, a critical density of skilled personnel in home institutions was important to prevent a sense of isolation following the completing of international research collaborations and to ensure that the insights and experience gained did not remain restricted to the actual practitioners.

We are also brought to realize how important it is to have a degree of flexibility in the definition of the project. Flexibility is, however, a matter of trust between collaborating partners as well. The Regional Literatures project points to this most clearly, as not only did the definition of the project constantly shift as different strategies were employed to address what seemed to be initially a relatively straightforward research question, but the changing definition led to a different relationship between the personnel involved in the project, and in turn led to an expanded definition of the scope of the project. In particular, as additional languages like Bengali were brought in, the question of colonialism needed to be addressed, significantly altering a project that was initially supposed to be focused on the premodern period. A completely different set of factors, the ongoing political tensions between India and Pakistan, also affected the terms of the project leading to the need to "balance" Hindi and Urdu scholars in order to demonstrate even-handedness. These changes did not upset the course of the project, but worked to strengthen it in the end, as the relationship between existing project members was tested and proved durable enough to weather these storms. We see a similar pattern in the work of the JCLAS where, in spite of severely declining budgets in the 1980s, the historically developed relationship between members of the joint committee remained strong—the committee proved flexible enough to respond to the highly contentious political and economic challenges of the times with great success as a list of the publications of the committee from that period shows clearly.

Collaboration leading to capacity building seems to have been an extremely valuable product (or in some cases, byproduct) of all the cases discussed. In one case, the project leader used the opportunity presented by the project to become an expert in a new language; other participants in the Regional Literatures project had to step out of familiar settings and engage with experts operating with different theoretical perspectives, growing as scholars as a result. Over time, Latin American and US scholars found themselves incorporating the best of one another's training and worldviews while becoming more aware of their own national biases and limitations. This undoubtedly influenced their choices, in positive ways, of who among the next generation of schol-

ars most deserved to be funded by the joint committee, and why. Most impressive in this regard is the NAI—from the training workshops that sought to create new interdisciplinary methods that addressed various levels of analysis, to the efforts to link up researchers from different countries who were doing similar work, to the constant interface with other Africa-based institutions and non-governmental organizations, to the large number of peer-reviewed publications they helped generate, to the explicit attention to bringing in women and junior researchers. The capacity that the NAI seems to have generated may well be the greatest legacy of this project.

Most intriguing in these cases is the frequent reference to chance. This is the most humbling consideration from the point of view of the large institution that seeks to initiate international collaboration, as it reminds us that often successful collaboration is not independent of luck and happenstance. For instance, the rise of authoritarian regimes in Latin America provided a common point of reference to scholars from different countries and with different disciplinary interests, the lack of a colonial history in the region enabled the Nordic Africa Institute to be seen as a neutral institution with good intentions in the support of social science research in Africa, the coincidence that Pollock and Rao were serving on the same committee at a time when the state of the humanities in South Asian studies was being vigorously debated. It should be noted that chance sometimes lay outside the bounds of the collaboration itself. Two examples mentioned in the reports are, first, Fidel Castro's "triumphant march" into Havana in 1959, during the height of the cold war, which did more for the field of Latin American studies in the United States from a financial point of view than any number of needs assessment reports or pleas by various stakeholders, and, second, the Indonesian government's decision to ban Dutch researchers, which led to a renewed Dutch interest in India. This raises the question, as the case of the JCLAS makes most explicit, of the difficulty of replicability. The sobering conclusion, hence, is that we cannot always be sure, even in the presence of clearly defined needs and all the goodwill in the world, that international collaboration will succeed. However, these cases stand as testament to the gains possible when it does.

Finally, an issue that cannot be escaped, money. What strikes us immediately in reading these cases is how very little money seems to be involved, when seen from the vantage point of New York. The Regional Literatures project noted the lack of US\$5,000 which would have allowed valuable archival research to be carried out, the Nordic Africa Institute ran its project on an annual research budget of under US\$40,000 (excluding salaries), the first phase of the Indo-Dutch program spent about \$100,000 per annum including all non-project research activities like seminars, scholar exchange, publications, selection committee meetings, and salaries. These examples bring into relief a number of issues. For instance, it reminds us how far even a small amount of money, when calibrated in Western currency and standards, goes in the developing world. One troubling implication is that a US-based graduate student getting by on a stipend of \$15,000 (the amount awarded by the SSRC's International Dissertation Field Research Fellowship), can wield a considerable

amount of financial power when looking for research assistants in most countries of the developing world.

The unequal weight of money in different locations points also to a different kind of leverage. The Indian Council of Social Science Research needed the Indo-Dutch program (IDPAD) much more than the small numbers of Dutch scholars who worked on South Asia. The sheer scale of the Indo-Dutch program (the number of projects funded, seminars held, and scholarly exchange) allowed large numbers of Indian scholars to receive institutional support and gave them exposure to new research questions. But the ability of ICSSR to channel resources to the research institutes they supported through the IDPAD program allowed their own funds to be used for other purposes, thus broadening the impact of their limited resources. It also reminds us that a lot of good social science research doesn't need huge amounts of funds to get done, even though the ongoing "scientization" of the social sciences brings in its wake demands for large budgets and expensive equipment. As an economist would put it, the marginal value of a research dollar spent in the South is greater than the marginal value of that same dollar spent elsewhere. But would the successes outlined in these cases have been possible if the money had merely been sent to the developing world as "scholarly aid"?

This rhetorical question brings us to the final consideration: what would we have lost in terms of new knowledge, new concepts, and new scholarship if these projects had never gotten off the ground? The inescapable conclusion of these studies is that neither money by itself nor the desire to produce good research were sufficient conditions for the creation and maintenance of good collaborative projects. The more fundamental finding of these studies is that it was the mix of skills, institutional support, timing, and funding that made new ideas, long-running research programs, and novel findings possible.

We live in a world where some of these features—e.g., skills—are distributed more evenly than others—e.g., money. As we begin to accept that research problems can no longer be defined narrowly—either because the same questions are being asked in multiple locations or because one problem affects more than one (politically defined) location—the need to bring a multiplicity of approaches to a problem seems beyond question. International research collaboration at that point moves from being a curiosity to a necessity. These studies point to the need to define the approach to solving real world and research problems in a way that optimally combines the various advantages and resource bases of different locations. Our modest conclusion is that optimal mix of features cannot be known a priori but has to be constantly recalibrated by participants and institutions, in an environment that is critically self-conscious of the need to respect fairness and open communication.

Measuring International Collaboration *

Itty Abraham and Tina Harris

THE call to scholarly collaboration in the social sciences is a familiar one these days. For both political and intellectual reasons, foundations, donor agencies, and scientific organizations all call for more collaboration between scholars from different parts of the world. In its simplest form, the need for collaboration emerges from the gap between the complexity of social life and the difficulty of any one individual in developing the required multiple competencies to address these complexities in all their glory. Closing the gap demands a form of scholarship that is rarely served by narrowly defined, individually oriented projects.

The increasing frequency of the call to collaboration should not be taken to mean that there is something new about this form of scholarly interaction. Quite the contrary. Whether one considers the most obvious forms of scholarly collaboration in the social sciences—namely, multiyear large group projects like the venerable Harvard-Chiapas project and the SSRC Committee on Comparative Politics—or the less so—namely, the introduction to any monograph with its histories of interpersonal collaboration disguised as statements of thanks and support—it becomes clear that the social sciences are at least as social as the physical sciences. But, in the United States at least, our conventional understanding of the social sciences finds this difficult to acknowledge. Most vividly, reward systems—tenure, promotion, and disciplinary status—focus almost completely on the individual, sometimes even going so far as to see collective work as indicating some kind of weakness or limitation. Needless to say, there are substantial differences within the social sciences, with some fields, e.g., clinical psychology and physical anthropology, having a long tradition of team work including across national boundaries, and others, like political science and history, far more prone to privilege the image of the individual scholar toiling alone far from home and hearth.

To a considerable extent, of course, our limited comprehension of the differences between scholarly practice and institutional systems reflects the weakness of what might be called a sociology of the social sciences. Notwithstanding this lack, with every additional call to collaboration we are faced with the knowledge that we still know very little about its basic qualities: How it is done, when it is done, how it is done well, and when it can become self-sustaining, to take just the most obvious questions. When we add to this limited knowledge our interest in international collaborations, especially between scholars and institutions from the North and the South, we must consider how the social elements of interaction are complicated by the political economy of difference.

* The authors would like to thank Olle Persson and Diana Hicks for their help in preparing this article.

Understanding International Collaboration

With these concerns in mind, in 1998 the SSRC established an international working group on International Scholarly Collaboration. Its mandate was to explore how a fuller understanding of the nature and form of international scholarly collaboration might benefit academia, institutions, and individuals in practical ways, and help prevent the repetition of some of the more egregious examples of unequal and asymmetric international scholarly relations. Following two planning meetings held in August 1998 and April 1999, members of the working group decided that they would identify and examine select cases of North-South collaboration paying special attention to the processes of collaboration.

As a necessary complement to the working group studies, it became clear that there was a need for a broad quantitative view of the scope of collaborative research in the social sciences. At the very least, one would want to know whether or not international collaboration has increased over time and within which fields. Estimating this, however, is no simple task, for there is no readily available bibliometric tool for tracking international collaborative research in the social sciences. Even more fundamental, however, is to determine how one measures international collaboration. The standard answer to this question is to take jointly authored articles and books as a measure of collaboration, even though it is clear that joint authorship as an index undercounts the universe of collaborative activities, gives us no indication of the process and mechanisms by which collaboration took place, and offers no insight into the power dynamics between the researchers. These limitations are compounded by the weakness of existing social science databases.

The most comprehensive database available for the study of bibliometric statistics in the social sciences is the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), published by the privately owned and US-based Institute of Scientific Information (ISI). The SSCI provides bibliographic information—including cited references—in a print version for the years 1956-1980 and a CD-ROM version from 1980 onwards. This database now covers 1,737 international journals in the social sciences, of which the great majority are drawn from the United States and Western Europe; very few non-European language journals are included. In addition, the structure of the SSCI database only allows for the selection of certain fields (author name, title name, journal name, cited references, authors' addresses, and their Boolean combinations), and is not organized under subject headings, further reducing its utility for many purposes.¹

Given these constraints, we attempted to measure the scope of international collaboration using data on joint authorship in selected social science disciplines over the decade 1985 to 1995. Based

¹ Other limitations include inconsistencies in country names (e.g., Russia listed as USSR and Senegal as Senegambia in 1985), journal entries (e.g., *Antipode* was not listed until after 1985, *Journal of Comparative Psychology* was not included in 1995) and multiple listings (e.g., *Social Dynamics* is included in both the anthropology and area studies lists).

on the assumption that higher per capita public expenditures on science were a measure of the strength of the scientific community in a given country, we chose the top 50 Southern countries in this category in order to maximize the chances of picking up our unit of measurement. We searched approximately 50 journals in all fields in the social sciences, and acquired detailed results for the fields of anthropology and area studies. After obtaining a comprehensive list of the articles in each section, we examined the institutional address of each authors in order to determine whether they were international co-authorships.

Table 1
Sample of international co-authored journal articles, 1985 and 1995

Field	Total Articles 1985	Co-Authorships	Int'l Coauthorships	Total Articles 1995	Co-Authorships	Int'l Collaborations
Anthropology	4	0	0	15	3	1
Area Studies	18	1	1	25	2	2
Economics	42	26	17	99	47	35
Ethnic Studies	1	0	0	2	0	0
Geography	0	0	0	3	1	1
History	3	0	0	1	0	0
Political Science	6	1	0	23	2	0
Psychology	25	14	5	111	49	14
Sociology	3	2	1	4	1	1
Women's Studies	1	0	0	1	0	0
Total	103	44	24	284	105	54

Notes: Total articles based on 50 selected journals and 50 selected countries. All data from the SSCI.

Based on this sample, we can confirm our expectation that the quantum of international collaboration (measured through co-authorship) has increased in recent years.² In 1985, there were 24 internationally co-authored articles in our sample, 10 years later there were 44. However the proportion of jointly authored articles, domestic and international, did not reflect this trend. In 1985, 43% of all articles were jointly authored, of which 23% involved authors from different countries. In 1995, 36% of all articles were jointly authored, with only 19% having collaborators from different countries. The proportion of international co-authored articles to all co-authored articles

² A far more comprehensive study shows that international social science collaborations have doubled from 1981-1996. See Goran Melin and Olle Persson, "Studying research collaboration using co-authorships," *Scientometrics* 36, 3 (1996): 363-377.

remained roughly the same, dropping from 55% in 1985 to 51% in 1995. Moving from aggregate figures to particular fields, the data shows that by far the most collaborations took place in economics and psychology. Within these fields too the same trend is observed, namely, that the proportion of internationally co-authored articles declines from 1985 to 1995.

That psychology and economics came up as high in this category did not strike us as very surprising. Both fields have over time considerably internalized the patterns and forms of physical science: just as we would not be surprised to see a large number of collaborations in physics or chemistry, so also these fields. What surprised us a little more was to see some evidence of collaboration in area studies and anthropology, both fields in which culture and history are quite important, and in which joint work is thought to be relatively less common. As a result we decided to explore these fields in more depth, both to see how anomalous these results were and also because it was relatively practical to do a census on these fields based on their small size within the SSCI database.

Table 2
International collaborations by world regions
Anthropology and area studies, 1985 and 1995

Field and Year	Anthropology 1985	Anthropology 1995	Area Studies 1985	Area Studies 1995
Total Articles	64	210	54	146
Co-Authorships	30	92	6	29
Int'l Collaborations	16	51	6	15
North-North	4	13	1	2
North-South	12	38	5	13
South-South	0	0	0	0

Note: All 50 anthropology and 35 area studies journals indexed in the SSCI were included.

Taking anthropology first, we find there was a slight drop in the number of jointly published articles across the decade, from 46% to 43%. One-quarter of these articles were the joint work of international collaborators, the proportion remaining consistent for both time periods: in other words, 50% of all collaborations involved scholars from two or more countries. If we ask where they were located, we find that three-fourths of all international collaborations were North-South and the remaining number North-North. South-South collaborations were nonexistent. In the area studies field, with a much smaller overall population of articles, while the proportion of jointly-authored articles stayed consistent (11%), the number of international collaborations was con-

sistent with the anthropologists (over 50%). International collaborations were even more biased toward North-South interactions, over 80% in the two time periods surveyed. Here too, South-South collaborations were nonexistent.

Looking at the breakdown of the numbers by journal, the majority of international collaborations in anthropology were concentrated in three journals, *American Journal of Human Biology*, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, and *Journal of Human Evolution*. All three journals straddle the social and physical sciences, with a clear orientation toward the latter. It should not surprise us to find that, given this orientation, that patterns of scholarly practice mimic patterns typical of the hard sciences, with an emphasis on team work and joint publications. In the area studies field, nearly all the international joint publications were found in the journals *Asian Survey*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, and *Journal of Inter-American and World Affairs*. It is less easy to generalize about these three journals, except to note that they tend to concentrate on contemporary affairs and traditional international relations. However, to find any joint publications in the area studies field would come as a surprise to many.

Conclusion

What can quantitative studies of this kind tell us? Recognizing fully the limitations of the analysis presented here, the data suggests that the proportion of international joint-authored articles seems to be declining slightly, or at least not increasing significantly, across a number of disciplines. Disciplines and fields whose scholarly practices approximate the patterns of the hard sciences have the largest number of international co-authored publications. Finally, we find that while the ratio of North-South to North-North co-authored articles is greater than one, South-South collaborations appear to be nonexistent.

How reliable are these findings? In the first instance, the limitations of the SSCI database have to be acknowledged. We have pointed out the limited coverage of this index, its bias towards Western publications, and the difficulty of using it to get at the results we are looking for. We hope some of these constraints may be addressed in the ongoing discussion at the National Science Foundation to set up a social science database similar to its Science and Technology Indicators.³ But beyond existing database problems, we must ask if the universe of social science is covered by a database that only includes the results of articles published in scholarly journals. The biggest absence appears to be scholarship that comes out of the large and growing nongovernmental sector, all over the world. Not all of the published work from the NGO sector qualifies as academic scholarship, and even less of it is produced following our usual norms of reliability, e.g., peer review, but there

³For some of the issues being considered see Diana Hicks' presentation to the National Science Foundation, "New bibliometric indicators for the social sciences," February 25, 1999, mimeo.

is still much that does qualify as social science, is produced by practicing social scientists, and often has an impact far in excess of much that comes out of our social science journals. Jointly authored work that is sponsored in this sector is quite absent from our traditional measures: just like estimates of the black market, we have no way of knowing how much knowledge is produced in this sector, let alone reflects collaboration. Finally, a point made earlier: collaboration is not synonymous with co-authorship and vice versa.⁴ All of this goes to say that whatever results we might draw from quantitative studies are likely to undercount the degree of collaboration for all these reasons. If we adopt the position that collaboration is a necessary feature of interdisciplinary scholarship, and that we are keen to promote it internationally, quantitative studies can only give us a broad sketch of the trends. The other kinds of questions we might be interested in—why collaborations take place, why they fail or succeed, how successful collaborations can be replicated, and how they can be sustained over time—will have to draw their inspiration (and evidence) from other kinds of studies.

⁴This point is made in Melin and Persson, “Studying research collaborations,” pp. 363-365.

The Joint Committee on Latin American Studies

Lisa Hilbink and Paul Drake

Over the past 40 years, scholars of and from Latin America have developed or contributed to some of the most important and influential theories and debates in the social sciences and humanities. From dependency to democratization, from studies on the state to research on social movements, “Latin Americanists” have been at the forefront of theoretical development in a variety of disciplines. Much of this achievement can be attributed to the success of the ACLS and SSRC’s Joint Committee on Latin American Studies (JCLAS) in promoting genuine international research collaboration (IRC).¹ The international collaborative activities of the JCLAS helped to bridge the gap in topical interests, research methods, and conceptual commitments between Latin American and US scholars. Scholarly interchange between the generally more qualitative, theoretical, often Marxist Latin Americans and the frequently more quantitative, empirical, often liberal North Americans tested theories, whether modernization from the North or dependency from the South. It also helped to challenge national biases. For example, the content of scholarly debate in Latin America compelled North American scholarship to address issues such as class inequality and class conflict, both domestically and internationally, while North Americans brought to the table concerns about democratic stability and gender inequities. The JCLAS thus helped to curb parochialism in the humanities and social sciences both in the US and Latin America.

This paper offers an analysis of the JCLAS as a potential “model” for the promotion of IRC. Drawing on interviews with former Committee members and SSRC staff, official reports of the SSRC, and other written accounts of the Committee’s activities,² the paper offers a brief history of the Committee’s founding, evolution, and closure, highlighting the ways in which the rules, roles, resources, and practices of the institution enabled or constrained successful IRC during its nearly 40-year existence. It demonstrates that the JCLAS was in many ways ahead of its time in the promotion of genuine IRC, and argues that it might serve as a useful, albeit not entirely replicable, model for the internationalization of scholarly inquiry in the new era of “globalization.”

¹ For the purposes of this paper, international research collaboration is defined as cooperation in research endeavors between individuals from different countries in which common vocabularies or conceptual bridges are created, allowing for new ways of thinking, resulting in a product that would not exist in this form if not for the encounter.

² This work draws heavily on John H. Coatsworth’s excellent 1989 piece, “International Collaboration in the Social Sciences: The ACLS/SSRC Joint Committee on Latin American Studies” (paper presented at the SSRC/CLACSO conference on “International Scholarly Relations in the Social Sciences,” Montevideo, Uruguay, August 15-17, 1989).

History of the JCLAS

The JCLAS was one of 11 foreign area committees jointly sponsored by the American Council of Learned Studies (ACLS) and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).³ The ACLS established the first Council on Latin American Studies in 1931.⁴ In 1942, shortly after the US entered World War II, the SSRC joined with ACLS to form the JCLAS. During this time, the committee's main activities were directed toward securing Latin American cooperation in the war effort.⁵ However, in the late 40s and early 50s, policymakers did not see specialized knowledge of Latin America as a major investment. Latin America was not deemed a national security priority, and Spanish was viewed as an "easy" language with bountiful practitioners. Thus, the JCLAS was disbanded from 1947-1959.⁶

Only with the Cuban Revolution of 1959 did Latin America once again become a strategic priority.⁷ Indeed, "the first meeting of the new JCLAS took place a few weeks after Fidel Castro marched triumphantly into Havana."⁸ The broader context for the recreation of the JCLAS also included the Soviet launching of Sputnik, which created a fear of general scientific lag in the US, and a series of unpredicted international events, "such as the riot that greeted Vice President Richard Nixon's visit to Caracas in 1957, ...which raise[d] public awareness of the nation's deficiencies in international education."⁹ Such experiences "served to make painfully obvious our almost total unpreparedness as a nation to deal effectively with the sudden intensification of American contacts with what were unfamiliar societies and cultures.... This deficit had to be made up—and under the most urgent and demanding circumstances, those of modern and total warfare."¹⁰

This sense of political urgency helped the new committee to mobilize financial support for its activities, first from the Carnegie Corporation, and then, after 1961, from the Ford Foundation.¹¹ Like the other joint area committees, the JCLAS was composed of seven to eight distinguished scholars recruited by the Council.¹² The founding members had recognized expertise on and strong ties to Latin America. Bryce Wood, the highly respected historian who served as the original SSRC staff member of the committee, was competent, dedicated, diplomatic, and proactive. Several of

³ For a brief history of all of the joint area committees, see Elbridge Silbey, *Social Science Research Council: The First Fifty Years* (1974), chap. 6, and *Social Science Research Council: Annual Report*, 1995-1996, 23-70.

⁴ In 1936, this committee founded the *Handbook on Latin American Studies*, the principal US periodical reference in the field since that time. For a discussion of the development of Latin American studies in the US, see Charles Wagley, ed., *Social Science Research on Latin America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964).

⁵ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 21-2. The chair of the committee during this time was Lewis Hanke of the Library of Congress.

⁶ Nonetheless, during this period some Latin Americanists did serve as consultants to the US State Department. See Michael Jiménez, "In the Middle of the Mess: Rereading John J. Johnson's Political Change in Latin America Thirty Years Later" (paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association 15th Annual Conference, Miami, Florida, December 6, 1989).

⁷ See Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

⁸ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰ Silbey, *First Fifty Years*, 86.

¹¹ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 24.

¹² Afterwards, committee members were selected jointly by the chair and the staff person, often in consultation with existing members, and subject to approval by the president of the SSRC and, theoretically, the governing board. They served (informal) terms of three years. The chair was always chosen from existing members and could serve an additional three years, if not more. Note that the "staff person" refers to the employee of the SSRC who was in charge, among other things, of the administration of the committee.

those interviewed for this paper attributed the JCLAS's early success to him and to other senior scholars, such as Charles Wagley and Albert Hirschman, who mentored and reached across generations in order to build the field.¹³ Also key was general support for the area studies project from then SSRC president, Pendleton Herring.¹⁴

Between 1962 and 1968, the JCLAS received \$5.3 million from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation, or approximately \$757,000 annually.¹⁵ The funds were used for advanced research (postdoctoral) grants, research seminars and conferences, a US-Latin American faculty exchange program,¹⁶ and, notably, a number of important field development activities. The group's main task was the administration of grants to individual scholars for research related to Latin America.¹⁷ This allowed members the chance to gain a vision of what was going on in the field as a whole, and to promote cutting edge research.¹⁸ In addition to "explor[ing] ways of contributing to the development of research and training in the field," they also made it their mission to "improve communication among scholars in the US and Latin America."¹⁹ For example, between 1961 and 1964, the JCLAS cosponsored and helped to finance three meetings of Latin American and US sociologists in Latin American capitals, leading to the formation of the Latin American Council of the Social Sciences (CLACSO).²⁰ In addition, the committee sponsored several meetings devoted to assessing the state of Latin American studies in the US and spearheaded the establishment of the Latin American Studies Association in 1964 and the field's most respected journal, the *Latin American Research Review*, in 1965.

The groundwork laid in the early years produced a fruitful collaborative trajectory. The initial conferences helped scholars to develop networks and form new working groups which, with the JCLAS as a source of support, could go on to organize further encounters. As former chair John Coatsworth put it in an interview, "active people with good networks were the key to the committee's success. A certain synergism was created that became self-sustaining."²¹

Another universally cited ingredient of the JCLAS's success was its commitment to equal participation by US and Latin American scholars alike. "Latin American participation became standard for all JCLAS-sponsored conferences and projects early in the 1960s."²² Moreover, the JCLAS

¹³ Interviews, Stanley J. Stein (JCLAS member, 1961-64 and 1984-86) and Louis Goodman (SSRC staff, 1972-78), September 6, 1999, and August 30, 1999, respectively. In a personal email communication of September 26, 1999, SSRC historian Kenton Worcester also lent support to this account.

¹⁴ Interview, Stein, and email communication, Worcester.

¹⁵ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 24.

¹⁶ This program "brought 49 Latin American scholars to teach in US universities and provided grants to 34 US faculty for research and teaching in Latin America" (Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 33).

¹⁷ Until 1973, the committee distributed funds for doctoral field research under the Ford Foundation's Foreign Area Fellowship Program (FAFP). Of a total of 2050 fellowships awarded by the SSRC from 1953-1972, 269 (13%) went for field research in Latin America. Of these 269, 23% went to projects in history, 19% to political science, 16% to anthropology, 12% to economics, 5% to sociology, and 2% to languages/literature.

¹⁸ Interviews, Stein and Goodman.

¹⁹ Social Science Research Council, *Annual Report*, 1961-62, 46.

²⁰ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 33. Eric Hershberg (SSRC staff, 1990 to present), said this sponsorship is really striking because CLACSO was founded by scholars of a clear anti-imperialist bent, who developed and promoted the dependency paradigm (Interview, Sept. 6, 1999).

²¹ Interview, John H. Coatsworth (JCLAS chair, 1986-90), August 31, 1999.

²² Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 33. This was made possible by what Kenton Worcester described as "the longstanding connection between elite American social science and Latin American studies, which in turn reflected the country's special interest in hemispheric political and economic affairs" (email communication). Brooke Larson (SSRC staff 1981-84 and JCLAS member 1990-93) noted that Latin American studies was "more mature, [and] richer economically and intellectually" than other areas studies projects at the time (email interview, September 29, 1999).

was the first area studies committee to incorporate scholars from its region and the only one where they came to constitute half of the committee's members as a matter of policy.²³ Those Latin Americans recruited for the JCLAS in the 1960s were a very distinguished and self-confident cohort.²⁴ They were trained in and committed to First-World social science, and, in part for this reason, they had international legitimacy. However, they also saw themselves as representatives of the Latin American region, and thought in regional terms.²⁵ The JCLAS thus served as a venue for the meeting of these strong and committed minds.²⁶

The result was that the committee developed, early on, a "culture of reciprocity," in which Latin American members were very powerful figures.²⁷ Argentine sociologist Jorge Balan, who served as chair of the committee from 1984 to 1986, described this as a "sense of joint ownership."²⁸ The North-South divide was simply not an important cleavage within the JCLAS. It was a trans-national rather than an imperial enterprise.²⁹ Indeed, as former SSRC staff member Louis Goodman put it, "the concerns of people from the region were in the majority" on the committee.³⁰

The fact that the committee was a private organization, largely independent—or at least perceived as independent—of the US government and its policies, was key to attracting Latin American scholars in an era when suspicion of and hostility toward the US government was high. The "Operation Camelot" scandal of 1964 had led to fear on the part of the Latin American studies community that their scholarship would be tainted or appropriated for improper purposes.³¹ US-based scholars even worried that their research would be made impossible by anti-US security agency suspicions on the part of Latin Americans. Incorporation of Latin America scholars into the Joint committee and the SSRC's reputation for independence of official agencies "helped to legitimate US scholarly activity in the region, promote the growth of informal networks, and thus helped to ease access to institutions, field sites, and other sources in the region."³²

Also helpful to promoting IRC was the fact that the JCLAS was authorized, until 1990, to award grants to individuals on the basis of merit alone, without regard to the nationality of the grant-seeker. The first Latin Americans to receive support were those included in collaborative

²³ Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda was the first Latin American to serve on the committee, beginning in 1964. According to all interviewees, non-US membership on the other SSRC joint committees was merely "token."

²⁴ Interviews, Louis Goodman and Eric Hershberg. Goodman claims that the SSRC Latin America division staff members were thus "respectful if not in awe of the Latin American scholars on the committee."

²⁵ Interview, Eric Hershberg. In his view, this was their response to international conditions, the "postcolonial moment."

²⁶ Louis Goodman emphasized that while the members of the committee were "deeply imbued with knowledge of the history and culture of the region," they were also all clearly comparativists.

²⁷ Interview, Eric Hershberg.

²⁸ Interview with Jorge Balan (JCLAS member 1982-83, chair 1984-86), September 7, 1999.

²⁹ Interview, Eric Hershberg.

³⁰ Interview, Louis Goodman.

³¹ Project Camelot was a US Army-funded initiative of the Special Operations Research Office of American University that sought to use area scholars to gather information relevant to the counterinsurgency program of the US government. The operation turned scandal when a Norwegian sociologist working in Chile was invited to participate, but instead publicized the goals of the project to his Chilean colleagues. This was "enough to arouse considerable discussion in Chile, an intervention by the president of Chile with the US State Department, debate in the US Congress, and cancellation of the project worldwide" (Immanuel Wallerstein, "Unintended Consequences," in *The Cold War & the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years*, ed. Noam Chomsky [New York: New Press, 1997]). On this issue see Irving Louis Horowitz, *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship between Social Science and Practical Politics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967); and Sigmund Diamond, *Compromised Campus: The Collaboration of Universities with the Intelligence Community, 1945-1955* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

³² Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 32.

grants, which began in 1968-69. For the next four years, four to five Latin Americans enjoyed such support each year. Individual grants to Latin Americans began in 1972-73. From 1972-1976, an average of 20 Latin Americans per year received support. In the late 70s and 1980s, this total averaged 10.³³ In all, between 1969 and 1989, nearly half of all of the JCLAS advanced research grants were awarded to Latin American investigators. These served as a “key resource for a whole generation of young Latin American social scientists.”³⁴

When asked to describe the internal functioning of the committee, all those interviewed for this paper claimed that meetings had been notably egalitarian and transparent. While the SSRC staff person bore most of the burden of fundraising and organization of committee meetings, and the chair was crucial to maintaining good relations with the SSRC administration, interviewees insisted that the committee’s decisions on what proposals and activities to fund were not determined by either the chair or the staff member.³⁵ No written rules ever guided the functioning of the committee; rather, there was always a “self-regulating spirit” of openness and consensus-seeking.³⁶ Former SSRC staff and JCLAS member Brooke Larson explained that the JCLAS had a “special esprit de corps.” Aided by the “Latin American cultural presence, which always added a sense of political commitment...and a dose of levity,” the committee “worked, played, and laughed together better than any other” area studies committee.³⁷

In general, the SSRC placed great trust in the committee and extended members the latitude to allocate funds in the ways that they viewed as most intelligent and promising. Membership on the committee was thus a privileged opportunity to help shape the field of Latin American studies.³⁸ However, the fact that the JCLAS set itself apart from the other joint committees—because it included Latin Americans on an equal basis, was more heavily social science than humanities oriented, and tended to have loyal and academically active staff members—produced some tensions and misunderstandings along the way.³⁹ Some interviewees felt that the committee was forced to spend too much time defending itself.⁴⁰ However, others contended that the constraints on the committee were not so much political or interpersonal as, simply, financial.⁴¹

³³ Data compiled from the SSRC’s *Annual Reports* for these years.

³⁴ Interview, Eric Hershberg.

³⁵ Indeed, without any prompting whatsoever, interviewees’ expressed respect, admiration, gratitude, and affection toward those with whom they had worked, whether staff or general members. Eric Hershberg emphasized that the committee had “always been well-chaired.”

³⁶ Jorge Balan recounted that during his tenure as chair, the committee had only been reduced to taking a vote on one occasion.

³⁷ Interview, Brooke Larson.

³⁸ The work of committee members was all pro bono, with no perks.

³⁹ A 1984 review of the SSRC/ACLS area studies committees criticized the JCLAS for devoting insufficient attention to the humanities and questioned the involvement of Latin American scholars on the JCLAS, “suggesting that this [had led] the JCLAS to adopt foreign research agendas and the more ‘politicized style’ characteristic of social scientific research in Latin America” (Coatsworth, “International Collaboration,” 36, discussing Richard D. Lambert, *Beyond Growth: The Next Stage in Language and Area Studies* [Washington: Association of American Universities, 1984]). The JCLAS responded vigorously to this latter criticism, arguing not only that the inclusion of regional scholars had been key to the success of social science research on Latin America, but that the Council should encourage foreign involvement in the other joint committees and extend direct support to research initiated in foreign countries. (For the arguments of one of the committee’s members at the time, see Adam Przeworski, “The Lambert Report,” *PS* 19:1 [winter 1986]:78-81.)

⁴⁰ Interviews, Louis Goodman and John Coatsworth. Brooke Larson noted that this justification had to be done “at a time of tremendous creativity and productivity” (interview).

⁴¹ Interviews, Stanley Stein, Jorge Balan, and Eric Hershberg. Jorge Balan also mentioned that technology limited what the committee could do, since most of its history predated the fax and electronic mail.

The heyday of the committee was the late 60s and early 70s, when resources were abundant.⁴² In 1973, however, amid shrinking budgets for higher education in general and a sense that US domestic issues needed more attention, the Ford Foundation ended its support for the Foreign Areas Fellowship Program.⁴³ The JCLAS was thus forced to discontinue many of its programs. The doctoral and advanced research fellowship competitions survived, albeit with perpetually diminishing funds,⁴⁴ and the committee switched its general emphasis from institution- and field-building activities to topically focused meetings and conferences.⁴⁵

In the mid-1970s, the JCLAS operated at 60 percent of its former budget (approximately \$600,000 annually). In 1981, funding dropped again, leaving the committee with only \$400,000 per annum for the rest of the 1980s. "In real terms, that is, correcting for the effects of inflation, JCLAS expenditures in 1987-88 equaled slightly less than one-eighth (12.3 percent) of the peak year of 1972-73."⁴⁶ As funding dwindled, the committee was forced to do less and smaller conferences, and to turn down many high quality research proposals.⁴⁷ Grants came with more strings attached, restricting what the committee could do with the funds at its disposal.⁴⁸ Moreover, the purchasing power and impact of the fellowships offered by the committee declined dramatically, especially for US scholars, since their value did not keep up with inflation.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, thematic collaborative research projects continued to fill "an acute need for Latin Americanists across the disciplines, and especially across political boundaries, to come together." The "strong presence of Latin Americans," the "decision to hold many—if not most—conferences in Latin America," the "deliberate pairing of a North American and a Latin American scholar as co-coordinators," and the "selection of collaborative research topics that had immediate relevance to contemporary political and social questions" made all the difference in achieving successful IRC.⁵⁰

In the 1990s, a continued decline in funding made it impossible for the JCLAS to continue its practice of inviting research planning proposals from the scholarly community at large.⁵¹ Until the committee's closure in 1996, projects were thus initiated almost exclusively by committee members

⁴² Coatsworth notes that by 1970, the Ford Foundation "had committed itself to multi-year support of the JCLAS and the Latin American component of the FAFP at a level of \$1.5 million per year." This allowed the JCLAS to expand its activities into new areas, such as the natural sciences, business, and engineering, and to offer summer workshops that brought together younger scholars (including graduate students) from both the US and Latin America for "intensive study of new and innovative research topics and methods under the direction of leading researchers in the relevant fields" ("International Collaboration," 25).

⁴³ Refer to note 17 above.

⁴⁴ From 1973 to 1981, the committee awarded a total of 403 fellowships, with a peak of 73 in 1974-75 and a low of 40 in 1980-81.

⁴⁵ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 26. For a survey of the support for and evolution of US-Latin American scholarly relations during the 1970s and 1980s, see Paul Drake, "From Retrogression to Resurgence: International Scholarly Relations with Latin America in US Universities, 1970s-1980s," (paper presented at the SSRC/CLACSO conference on "International Scholarly Relations in the Social Sciences," Montevideo, Uruguay, August 15-17, 1989).

⁴⁶ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 26. Grants from the Tinker and Mellon foundations, as well as supplemental monies from SSRC "core" funds, made up for some of what the committee lost when Ford retrenched.

⁴⁷ From 1981 to 1990, the committee awarded a total of only 277 fellowships, with the numbers declining steadily from 40 in 1981-82 to only 11 in 1989-90.

⁴⁸ Interviews, Stanley Stein, John Coatsworth, and Brooke Larson.

⁴⁹ Coatsworth, "International Collaboration," 28 and 34-5. See also Coatsworth's tables (pp. 61-65) on the JCLAS total budget, statistics on dissertation and advanced research fellowships, and dates and topics of research planning conferences.

⁵⁰ Interview, Brooke Larson.

⁵¹ Interview, Brooke Larson.

⁵¹ The last of the block grants from the Mellon Foundation, which had allowed the committee to play "mini-foundation," expired in 1989 (Eric Hershberg, "Activities of the SSRC/ACLS Joint Committee on Latin American Studies (JCLAS)," August 1995, photocopy).

and by SSRC staff. This made “fund-getting scholars” more desirable to recruit onto the committee.⁵² In addition, because funding for advanced research grants after 1990 came largely from NEH funds, Latin American scholars were prohibited from receiving advanced research grants. Despite these constraints, between 1990 and 1996, the committee offered a total of 83 modest dissertation grants, 71 advanced research grants, and sponsored a number of high-level research conferences to fulfill the SSRC’s “dual mandate” (established in 1990) of strengthening expertise on the region as well as expanding into cross-regional comparative studies.

In 1996, the pressure that had been building on the SSRC since the mid-1980s to restructure its international program led to the decision to terminate the area studies committees. In the view of the Council administration, “changes in world conditions and in international scholarship” required a new research and teaching agenda emphasizing “the connection between ‘local’ and ‘global’ processes of economic, social, cultural, and political change.” The area committees, “each focused on a single country or world region, would not provide an optimal structure for generating new insights and theories suitable for a world in which the geographic units of analysis are neither static nor straightforward.” With the objective of strengthening “the capacities of place-specific research that is sensitive to larger processes of change,” the area committees were thus replaced with less powerful “regional advisory panels.” The panels no longer controlled significant funds for fellowships or research projects.⁵³

Upon learning of this decision, the members of the JCLAS, a majority of them social scientists based in Latin America “had a just sense that—as far as the JCLAS was concerned—a straw man had been created.”⁵⁴ They did not view themselves as “area studies” specialists nor did they identify the JCLAS as an “area studies” body. Rather, they saw the JCLAS as a forum for airing ideas about the critical issues facing Latin America and about the potential of scholarly collaboration for addressing those issues across country and disciplinary boundaries. They could not understand why the Council would dismantle an institutional structure that had demonstrated a unique capacity to generate local knowledge and perspectives and, thereby, to help break down the parochialism of the US disciplines. While not opposed to the idea of inter-regional committees, the members of the JCLAS argued that in order to identify the most promising scholars working on particular questions, and to call attention to whatever might be at the cutting edge in different parts of the world, the Council’s international program needed at some level to be built around the common and stable link of language, history, and culture.⁵⁵

The individuals interviewed for this paper echoed many of these arguments. Most agreed that the time had come to “rethink area studies,” but all insisted that any new international program

⁵² Interview, Brooke Larson.

⁵³ *Social Science Research Council Annual Report*, 1995-1996, 24-5.

⁵⁴ Interview, Eric Hershberg.

⁵⁵ Memo from Eric Hershberg and Paul Drake to SSRC President Kenneth Prewitt, November 13, 1995.

structure must be carefully constructed to promote deep knowledge of cases through field work, to support younger scholars who can generally only conduct research in one language and region at a time, to encourage the participation of foreigners on an equal basis, and to foster, ideologically and financially, a true transnational exchange of ideas. Only this way will it be possible to produce a global community of scholars, whose perspectives can be respected and embraced both in the United States and abroad.

Conclusion

With all of this in mind, to what extent can and should the JCLAS serve as a model for future efforts to promote IRC? Almost all the individuals interviewed for this paper felt that the JCLAS was a product of its time, of a serendipitous set of conditions that arose in the 1960s. They agreed that the committee did not so much create as facilitate successful IRC. The raw materials for this success already existed: serious scholars with strong intellectual networks, a common identity, and similar interests. Later, the environment of authoritarianism in Latin America helped give the committee a sense of mission: the promotion of academic freedom as part of a broader commitment to democratic ideals. As Jorge Balan argued, “You can’t create a common identity if it doesn’t already exist out there; you can only build on it.” To this extent, then, the JCLAS “model” is not easily replicable.

Moreover, while the JCLAS was very successful in promoting IRC, it was not perfectly harmonious and egalitarian. For example, the committee definitely lagged in its acceptance of women as social scientists and of gender as a legitimate research topic. In addition, as Eric Hershberg emphasized, those Latin Americans who helped to form the identity and mission of the committee were the privileged of the South and they operated in a relatively elitist way in terms of deciding which knowledge would “count.” This latter condition may have been unavoidable, and, indeed, it may well have been part of the committee’s success. However, it should be taken into account in any analysis of the JCLAS as a “best example” of IRC.⁵⁶

Despite these reservations, some important lessons may still be drawn from the JCLAS experience. To begin, the selection of the initial group whose mission it will be to promote IRC appears to be of crucial importance. Key to the success of the JCLAS was the fact that its founders were well-established, active, and confident scholars with strong international networks. These individuals knew whom to recruit for the purposes of field-building and research innovation, and those selected were in turn able to identify and nurture the most promising young scholars in the field. Second, and relatedly, the JCLAS experience suggests that IRC flourishes when scholars are permitted to set the research agenda. From the beginning, the SSRC extended a significant degree of

⁵⁶ Interview, Eric Hershberg.

trust and autonomy to JCLAS members, taking care of the fundraising and then allowing the members to put their expertise to work quite freely in the distribution of those funds. This made membership on the committee very attractive, despite the fact that there were no material incentives or rewards for participation. A third important element of productive IRC appears to be support for foreign-based research initiatives. A large measure of the JCLAS's success rested in the inclusion of Latin American scholars on the committee itself and in the award of research fellowships to the most deserving proposals regardless of national origin. Many Latin American scholars whose voices might never have been heard because of the economic and political constraints in their home countries were able to influence the First-World social science agenda thanks to the open policy of the JCLAS. The success of this policy was aided by a fourth and final key factor: the relative independence that the JCLAS enjoyed from the US government. Latin American scholars were wary of US imperialist motives during the cold war and would not have agreed to cooperate in data collection on Latin American cases if the JCLAS had refused to let them participate in the definition of research parameters and the development of theories. There is no reason to believe that such caution on the part of foreign-based scholars will or should disappear in the era of US-led "globalization." Future projects to promote IRC should thus be sure to maintain a reasonable measure of independence from powerful government—or, for that matter, nongovernmental—interests.

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The South Asian Regional Literatures Project *

David Ludden

Supportive Institutions

This collaborative research project emerged inside area studies institutions in the late 1980s. Its leaders, Sheldon Pollock and Velcheru Narayana Rao, are senior faculty in South Asian studies at the Universities of Chicago and Wisconsin, respectively; and Pollock in particular is a driving force in his program. The leaders met on the Joint Committee on South Asia (JCSA) of the SSRC/ACLS, where they began their collaboration. The University of Chicago provided critical resources for the project, but the project leaders both report that the JCSA provided necessary stimulation and sustenance for the birth of the project.

The JCSA had a budget from which to provide seed money for joint projects sponsored by its members, typically conferences and edited volumes. Its membership comprised eight or nine scholars whose disciplines ranged across the humanities and social sciences, who all worked on South Asia. It held two three-day meetings annually, using SSRC core funding from the Ford Foundation. Members came to these meetings expecting joint projects to emerge within the group. Collaboration was expected. These practices and expectations generated collaborations of various kinds and many fond memories, but not many international research collaborations.

Intersecting Agendas

The Regional Literatures Project may be the only international research collaboration ever to emerge from the JCSA, though other JCSA projects entailed international collaboration to combine and cross-fertilize research agendas.¹ This project arose from an unusually productive partnership that was fostered inside the JCSA.

Sheldon Pollock and Velcheru Narayana Rao represented literary disciplines on a JCSA that was always dominated by historians and social scientists. Minority status encouraged their solidarity. The JCSA also provided a promising venue for enhancing literary studies, which are simultaneously highly valued (theoretically) and underappreciated (programmatically) in American South Asian studies. Because faculty from the University of Chicago had long had a high profile in American South Asian studies, bolstered by the JCSA, it was logical to think that the future of literary studies could be improved by a major collaborative project sponsored both by the JCSA and the

*This report is based on personal interviews and correspondence with the project leaders.

¹ One such project was called South Asian Political Economy (SAPE). SAPE had two or three meetings in India in the years 1979-1981. Participants came from the US and India. Papers were written by individuals, but in some cases, commissioned by the project leaders on the JCSA. My paper topic was assigned to me. Papers were discussed in draft at the meetings and revised several times. The final product reflected collaborative critique during meetings. But most authors wrote papers that they *could* have written anyway. My memory, however, is that these were additional assignments for most of us, which would not have been on our individual writing agendas at that time without the stimulation of SAPE. Ashok Rudra's paper, for instance, is unlike his other work; he told me specifically that he would not have done it without SAPE. Also, he would not have met or influenced most others on the project without SAPE. For junior scholars, such as myself, SAPE collaboration took the form of *mentoring*. I wrote a different paper than I would have without input from senior scholars at the meetings—especially Ashok Rudra, who thrashed me soundly for errors of interpretation and omission in early drafts.

University of Chicago.

Empirically, the project centers on emerging “regional” or “vernacular” literatures in South Asia after 1000 CE, when new literary languages emerged in a world of writing previously dominated by Sanskrit. The “literary turn” in history and social science during the 1980s made the study of emerging new forms of discourse more compelling. The JCSA was becoming preoccupied by a problematic newness in its intellectual environment, as the cold war sputtered to an end. An appreciation of the importance of the question of how authors create and intellectuals navigate historical transitions in their language of writing was settling in and moving across disciplines. In the 1990s, it became easier to appreciate that historical change in South Asian cultures had been understudied under the intellectual dominance of orientalism.² Awareness was also increasing among social scientists that diverging and conflicting trajectories of regional cultures are politically important. Hindu chauvinism harking back to a golden age of Sanskrit classicism gave new importance to the study of the history of cultural diversification.

In the late 1980s, it was felt at the JCSA that the study of the humanities in centers of South Asian studies in the US was in a crisis, drifting intellectually after a decade of critical attack on its orientalist roots. New departures were needed. There was a general sense that the study of the humanities badly needed new energy, new paradigms, new problematics, which moved beyond the rampant critique of old ways that typified the later years of the 1980s.

In this context, Pollock and Narayana Rao developed a strong belief that a specific kind of research combining literary, textual, linguistic, theoretical, and historical skills needed to be done, which could only be done collaboratively, by combining the skills of a group of scholars: this is real the starting point of the project.

Sharing and honing this idea in the context of the JCSA, the organization and conduct of the specific kind of collaborative research that the project leaders deemed to be necessary took almost a decade. It involved a lot of groping, trial and error. The energy of the two leaders, particularly Pollock (who remained on the JCSA after Narayana Rao rotated off) carried the collaboration forward at every step. The project outlasted the JCSA and only its initial phases were funded and facilitated by the JCSA. The leaders guided the project from start to finish.

² Edward Said's 1978 book, *Orientalism*, disturbed South Asian studies. In the later 80s, Ronal Inden (at the University of Chicago South Asia Center) was finishing *Imagining India* (Basil Blackwell, 1990), and he presented a draft to a seminar at the University of Pennsylvania South Asia center which generated *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament : Perspectives on South Asia* edited by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). *Subaltern Studies* arrived in 1982 and disrupted elitist cultural paradigms. In 1988, Oxford University Press released *Selected Subaltern Studies*, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, with a foreword by Edward Said. By 1989, there were six volumes of *Subaltern Studies* and sixteen related books by its founding collaborators.

Institutional Initiatives

Pollock joined the JCSA in the late 1980s, when Narayana Rao was on the committee and Toby Volkman, the SSRC program director, was instigating conversations in the JCSA about the humanities, in response to funding opportunities from Mellon. The JCSA chair at the time, Bernard S. Cohn, convened a conference on the “Future of the Humanities in South Asian Studies,” funded by Mellon. Pollock was assigned the topic of “historicity.” This was supposed to be the start of a three-year JCSA project on the humanities, funded by Mellon. Pollock then became the JCSA leader of this Humanities Project after Cohn left the JCSA and Paul Greenough became chair.

The JCSA was the central US site for discussions about the integration of social sciences and humanities in South Asian studies. It brought together scholars from major Title VI centers who felt a responsibility to improve teaching as well as research in area studies. In the early 1990s, the JCSA tried to improve its relationship with Title VI centers by fostering joint activities. An ill-defined “Humanities Project” was to be the centerpiece of this new effort at institutional collaboration. At the time, Arjun Appadurai (on the JCSA) was the University of Pennsylvania Title VI Center Director; he managed to get three or four centers to write budgets for this project into their Center grant applications to the Department of Education.

The JCSA held two of its semi-annual meetings at Penn and Berkeley to foster institutional collaboration and to stimulate conversations between scholars in the humanities and social sciences. A conference called “The Subject of Representation” was held in 1993, in Durham, North Carolina; this was the only substantial product of this failed effort at institutional collaboration. Pollock produced a slender report on this conference for *Items*.

This institutional collaboration failed as Title VI center priorities and personnel changed and as JCSA connections with centers disappeared. Appadurai, for instance, left Penn for Chicago. Centers had no prior record of collaboration with one another³ or with the JCSA, so people needed constant convincing that it was desirable. The Durham conference did not provide a recipe for new intellectual initiatives. Its jumble of cultural studies, film studies, religious studies, art history, music, literature, folklore, anthropology, and history did not add up to any kind of new agenda for the humanities.

³Title VI centers have never cooperated well, either across universities in the same area studies field or across fields within a university. The latter mode of cooperation was forced upon centers by omnibus institutions for “international and area studies” at Wisconsin, Michigan, Berkeley, and elsewhere during the 1990s. More recently, the Crossing Borders program at Ford, led by Toby Volkman, has stimulated some cross-area cooperation.

Lessons From Failure

The conference did produce a sense of collaborative possibilities among a specific set of participants: Pollock, Narayana Rao, Dipesh Chakravarty, Sudipta Kaviraj, and Arjun Appadurai. By this time, Appadurai was at Chicago, and Chakravarty was a regular visitor who would be hired a few years hence. Pollock became chair of the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations and spearheaded efforts to hire Appadurai and Chakravarty. It was at the Durham conference that he first met Sudipta Kaviraj, who would later turn out to be a key contributor.

Conversations within this group generated the ideas that would guide the Regional Literatures project.

- Rather than collaborative thinking about “the state of the humanities” and about teaching in universities, they needed to focus on collaborative research concerning the location and historicity of South Asian literatures.
- Because the original collaborative plan (to have more conferences of the same kind) failed to foster collective interest in research of the kind that Pollock and Narayana Rao had begun to envision, they abandoned it and turned the attention of the JCSA to other possibilities.

Thus they set their minds to fostering collaborative research in a field in which it was not standard academic practice. To understand the location and historicity of South Asian literatures, collaboration was necessary; and they determined that the lack of collaboration was holding back progress in the field.

- Research on individual literatures was being done by individual scholars who did not individually combine skills that were needed to locate their own literatures among others. For scholarship to transcend particularities and to dig down into specific locations, scholars need to combine textual expertise in reading literatures with theoretical/comparative expertise in locating texts in their wider world. Getting scholars together who individually commanded both sets of skills while specializing on different literatures became the basis of research collaboration.
- Research on the multiplicity of literatures was not being done. A key dynamic of South Asian literary cultures arises from their interaction, which cannot be captured by individual scholars working in isolation. Modern cultures have made it more difficult for scholars to develop multilingual competencies and linguistic nationalism and sub-nationalism have erected walls among literary traditions. This makes collaboration absolutely essential for understanding the whole of the cultural landscape but also increasingly difficult.

The study of South Asian literary history had to be collaborative but collaboration was not being

fostered under current conditions—indeed, quite the contrary. A team needed to be assembled.

Criteria for Team Membership

The project leaders (Pollock and Narayana Rao) set out to create a research team that would collectively have skills to (1) read old texts in ten or so languages, (2) analyze these texts inside their respective historical, social, and cultural locations, and (3) talk, learn, read, and write across the boundaries of their expertise and their literary cultures.

The leaders defined the criteria for membership and made the selection of team members. They set the agenda and found the people who individually could contribute the skills they needed to do what they wanted to do.

Assembling a Team

The limiting technical requirement for team membership was textual expertise. The leaders decided that such expertise was to be found primarily in South Asia and among scholars from South Asia living abroad. Thus the need for a particular combination of individual expertise propelled the internationalization of the research project.

Assembling a team that finally consisted of seventeen members took over two years. After the Durham meeting, in 1993, four more meetings occurred before the team was complete.

- December 1993. A workshop was held in Hyderabad (using old money from Mellon and the JCSA and new money from The Smithsonian Institution [Rupee funds]), called “New Literature, New Power: Literary History, Region, and Nation in South Asia.” All participants were from South Asia. Seventeen papers were presented. (Appendix 1) Some papers were published in *Social Scientist* (having been solicited by an editor who attended the conference.)⁴ Two additional team members were identified at this workshop.
- June 1994. A workshop was held in Chicago, funded by JCSA, where pursuing an NEH collaborative grant was discussed.
- Fall 1994. A workshop was held in Chicago on “Empire, Language, and Literature” funded by the Chicago Humanities Institute (Arjun Appadurai, director). Two more team members were confirmed at this meeting.

⁴ See also Sheldon Pollock, “The Cosmopolitan Vernacular,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57, no.1 (Feb. 1998): 6-37. Sheldon Pollock, “Literary History, Region, and Nation in South Asia: Introductory Note,” and “Literary History, Indian History, World History,” *Social Scientist* 23, nos.10-12 (Oct.-Dec. 1995): 112-142.

- December 1994. A smaller workshop was held in Delhi, at the Sahitya Akademi (U.R. Ananthamurthy, President), where one more team member was found.

In 1994, the leaders followed a clear strategy based on the identification of literatures that had to be covered and the kind of people they needed. Pollock wrote dozens of letters, scouring networks of South Asia scholars — following rumors and bits of information — like a detective, looking for people for the project. Several more team members were added in this way. Three more of Pollock’s Chicago colleagues were also added to the team. Pollock submitted the NEH grant in October 1994, before the Sahitya Akademi meeting, which was intended to add the last set of team members for what had now become an NEH collaborative research grant proposal.

Project Adapts to the Team

Adjustments were made to the design of the project as team members joined, because the people with requisite skills brought to the project other attributes that inflected the course of their joint work. The scope of the project changed to accommodate the interests of scholars whose skills were needed for the work, though its original core conception and topics remained.

- The historical timeframe was extended to include literary histories in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- The subject of “colonialism” was added because it was found to be essential for the study of Bengali literature.

Thus the core problematics of the project influenced the selection of team members; new members, however, bringing to bear the distinctive histories of their literatures in their various locations in South Asia, modified these problematics and the ideas that the group as a whole pursued collectively.

The idea that literary histories and their scholarly study are enmeshed in the histories of nationalism and national cultures became more explicitly part of the project as it developed. This idea had been present originally, but the leaders were focused only on premodern literary histories when collaboration began. As the team was assembled, however, national sentiments became more compelling as subjects of study and shaped the questions engaging team members. It is impossible in South Asia today not to see two literary languages, Urdu and Hindi, as also the national languages of two countries, Pakistan and India, which are always at political loggerheads with each other. It

would be difficult to say that these political tensions never seeped into the working of the group as well, but the project adjusted to its participants and to its political context. Such sensitivity seems to be essential in international scholarly collaboration.

Funding the Work

Funding from the JCSA, Mellon, Smithsonian, and University of Chicago's Center for International Studies, Committee on Southern Asian Studies and Center for South Asian Studies allowed the collaboration to begin by sponsoring meetings of scholars, many of whom never would have met otherwise and none of whom would have worked together otherwise.

Pollock submitted the NEH collaborative research grant application from at the University of Chicago, in October 1994. He was chair of the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations (1991-98); its stature and resources must have helped the application. University resources must have been used as matching support for the application. In addition, this large collaborative South Asian studies project created other institutional synergies in that the project would have been cited as a Chicago project in Title VI applications, perhaps attracting some more funding. For instance, James Nye, South Asian bibliographer at Chicago, played an important role as consultant to the project from its inception. He attended US-based meetings and helped to collect rare research materials, especially in Persian. The NEH grant may also have benefited from the mention of a JCSA supported pre-project component, which showed that the topic was important and the project feasible. Additional funding for the final project meeting was secured from Rockefeller's Bellagio Conference Center, where a final meeting of authors was held.

Pollock attended his last JCSA meeting in Istanbul in April 1996. The synergy with the SSRC did not end there, however, because Pollock pushed for the idea that SSRC NMERTA predissertation grants should target "orphan languages," which became part of the grant proposal. Subsequently, this idea has been adopted by the American Institute for Indian Studies and other funding agencies.

In 1996 the JCSA was dissolved. The supportive institutional environment provided by the JCSA (complete with the seed money and collaborative practices that launched this project) has not been replaced. NEH may now be the only US funding agency that supports collaborative research in the humanities.

In retrospect, mistakes were made in the application. No money was secured to support research work. A research fund to help finance research for scholars in South Asia would have helped the project immensely. There was a small fund for research consultancies to aid scholars who needed additional language skills. Small amounts were spent to send team members the books and

texts that they needed. It would have been possible to get a research fund for team members from NEH, in the original application; but NEH does not make it easy to move funds from one category (e.g. foreign meetings) to another (individual research expenses). Professional assistance in designing the grant would have been a great help. The deadline for spending all of the NEH funds was extended twice, but otherwise, it proved difficult to alter the original financial features of such grants. The University of Chicago has no one assigned to the task of assisting scholars in developing proposals and administering them. However, the University of Chicago's Office of Sponsored Research does liaise effectively with the NEH and keeps on top of all renewal deadlines.⁵

Dates, Meetings, and Deadlines

NEH funds were awarded beginning July 1, 1995, but because Pollock was then leaving for India to do research on his part of the project, he scheduled the first meeting of the group for spring 1996, in Chicago. The NEH application called for six meetings, two each year for three years, but only four meetings were held, the last in Bellagio in June 1998. Fewer meetings were held in part because contributors needed more time to prepare materials in order to make the meetings worth having. The final deadline for submitting papers for publication was September 1998. In October 1999, 14 of 17 papers plus the introduction had been completed. One participant has died. Continuity has been hard to maintain over this long period of gestation. Continuity and progress have been sustained primarily by Pollock, who is the sole editor of the volume of papers that will be the most immediate product of the project. The volume has now been published by University of California Press (Appendix 2).

The Substance of the Project

The international research collaboration project effectively began at the Hyderabad workshop, in 1994, when fifteen papers were discussed and seven were revised for publication in *Social Scientist*. The meeting itself produced not only the papers but also an invitation from the editor of the journal to publish the papers there. The research problem—Regional Literary Histories—was identified at this meeting. Obstacles to research collaboration were also identified and targeted for

⁵ Pollock clarifies thus in email:

... NEH does not make it easy to earmark money for this [research] purpose, though in retrospect I could perhaps have bent things a little.... The bigger problem was that I had no one to guide me in the design of the proposal. And it is a certainty that having a professional grant manager would have made my life much easier. Even the budget directors at the U. of C. weren't ever quite sure how much money I had available to spend, so Byzantine is the accounting system here. It sometimes approached a nightmare scenario.

removal. One of these obstacles was the alienation of modern scholarship and education from literature before the 16th century. Another was political sensitivity among scholars of Hindi and Urdu. The substance of the project shifted to remove these obstacles. Modern issues, such as colonialism, were brought into the scope of the work, and balancing was done to make sure that Hindi and Urdu got equal treatment. This balancing, though perhaps initially a response to factors internal to the group of collaborators, revealed a certain logic in the end, given the prominence of these two languages in the subcontinent today as the official languages of Pakistan and India.

All the meetings involved some people who would never have met otherwise. The substance of the conversations at the meetings was in this sense completely new. The leaders worked to get people together with a mix of skills who would be able to communicate with one another, respect their disparate expertise, and learn from one other.

The leaders did not foresee the final outcome. As the group was assembled, the substance of the project shifted with shifting team membership. The leaders were looking for people not only to add elements to a fixed recipe for research but also to define and redefine the substance of the project. In the process, social sciences entered the picture: one anthropologist, one political scientist, one historian, and several historians of religion. This disciplinary mixing was not one of the project's original goals.

The key criterion for membership was competency; and competent people brought different points of view. Unexpectedly, for instance, the desirable mix of competencies for handling Bengali literature (in the person of Sudipta Kaviraj) brought not only the disciplinary perspective of political science but also an overriding interest in problems of colonialism.

Pollock had envisioned a different kind of scholarly practice than the one that evolved. He had wanted joint authorship, collective production, in which people would learn substantively about one another's literatures. He had wanted two meetings a year to produce not only new discussions but also new kinds of writing. These goals proved unrealistic. When the group was finally assembled in Chicago, 17 team members committed themselves to write 17 individual essays that were discussed at later meetings and revised as a consequence of intense discussions among team members.

The Output of the Project

Some of the 17 authors did research, wrote essays, had conversations, and did learning that they would not have done otherwise. Some altered their way of reading and thinking about histories of literatures. Because most are teachers, this work will have an effect on learning: it may become possible for students to learn about other regions in ways they would not have been able to before this project. The volume that came from this project will also provide a foundation for new kinds of

learning and research. It will be a source book for comparative literary histories and cultural studies in South Asia. It will also be a solid indication that the field of South Asian literary studies is substantially different today than it was a decade ago. The careers of some of the team members have taken new directions as a result of this work, above all, that of Sheldon Pollock, who is now an established scholar of Old Kannada as well as of Sanskrit literature.

All this implies that not only was new knowledge produced but that capacity-building occurred. But there is no plan to continue this project or to generate a series of publications. It is unclear whether continued collaborations will occur among team members. The team seems to have been held together mostly by the leaders; a small subset of team members became reliable partners in shaping the agenda and finishing the work.

Appendix 1

New Literature, New Power: Literary History, Region, and Nation in South Asia

A Conference Sponsored by
Joint Committee on South Asia, SSRC, New York, NY
The Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC
Central University, Hyderabad, India
December 28-30, 1993
Central University, Hyderabad

Tuesday, December 28

Morning Session, 10:00 - 12:30

Inauguration: B. H. Krishnamoorthy, U. of Hyderabad

Introductory Remarks:

V. Narayana Rao, U. of Wisconsin, "The Concept of Regional Literatures: A Research Agenda"
Sheldon Pollock, U. of Chicago, "What Do We Mean by 'History' (and 'Literature' and 'India')
in 'Indian Literary History'?"

Lunch, 1:00-2:00

Afternoon Session, 2:30-5:00: "The Languages of Power"

Chairman: B.H. Krishnamoorthy

Ashok Kelkar, Deccan College, "Language as Power"

Indra Nath Choudhuri, Sahitya Akademi, "Sanskrit, Pali, and Power"

M. Ramalingam, Bharathidasan U., "Tamil Literary History and the Problem of Sanskrit"

Wednesday, December 29

Morning Session, 9:30 - 12:30: "Partitioned Literary Histories"

Chairman: K. K. Ranganathacharyulu

Anisuzzaman, U. of Dhaka, "Bengali Literary History: Some Considerations"

Mahasweta Sengupta, Vishwa-Bharati U., "Bengali as a Separate Literature"

Syeda Jaffer, U. of Hyderabad, "Dekkani Literature"

Yousuf Shareefuddin, Osmania U. (To be announced)

Afternoon Session, 2:30- 5:00:

**“The Emergence of Regional Literary Languages:
The Cases of Telugu and Kannada”**

Chairman: Ashok Kelkar

S. Nagaraju, U. of Hyderabad, “The Beginnings of Kannada and Telugu”

K. K. Ranganathacharyulu, U. of Hyderabad, “Telugu as a Literary Language”

K. V. Narayana, Kannada U., “The Rise of Kannada”

G. V. Subrahmanyam, U. of Hyderabad, “Evolution in Telugu Literary History”

Thursday, December 30

Morning Session, 9:30 - 1:00: “Regional ‘Modernities’”

Chairman: C. Rama Rao, Osmania U.

Shitamshu Yashashchandra, U. of Baroda, “Rise of Prose Forms in Nineteenth-Century Gujarati”

Jhancy James, U. Kerala, “Women Writing in Malayalam”

Shashi Mudiraj, U. Hyderabad, “Modern Hindi Literature: Observations on the Rise of the Novel”

K. Veerabhadra Rao, Telugu U., “European Contributions to Telugu Literature”

Concluding Remarks:

V. Narayana Rao and Sheldon Pollock

Respondents at Large:

A. Murali, U. of Hyderabad

U. N. Singh, U. of Hyderabad

Tejaswini Niranjana, U. of Hyderabad

S. C. Kumar, U. of Hyderabad

P. C. Narasimha Reddy, Sri Venkatesvara U.

K. Vishwanathan Reddy, Dr. Ambedkar Open U.

R. Srihari, U. of Hyderabad

P. Nararamasimha, U. of Hyderabad

M. L. K. Murthy, U. of Hyderabad

K. V. Tirumalesh, Central Institute of Indian and Foreign Languages

K. Bhaskar, Andhra Prabha, Hyderabad

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SHELDON POLLOCK

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MUZAFFAR ALAM (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

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VINAY DHARWADKER (University of Oklahoma)

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5 Critical Junctures in Kannada Literary Culture
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6 Poets, Patrons, Texts, Readers: Literary Culture in Telugu
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The Nordic Africa Institute

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

IN 1990, the Sweden-based Nordiska Afrikainstitutet (NAI) launched a 10-year research program called *The Political and Social Context of Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*.¹ Peter Gibbon coordinated the first phase of the project, from 1990-1994, and Adebayo Olukoshi coordinated the last two phases. The project will officially come to an end in 2000, although a series of follow-up activities have been planned.

The program's objective was to inform the social and economic policymaking process by providing empirically grounded research. It was NAI's goal to use its collaborative model to build the capacity of African researchers and institutions and increase the African voice in the structural adjustment debate. It seems unlikely that the NAI is concerned with promoting the "Nordic way of life" through its research programs, given that the structural adjustment research program was led by Gibbon, who is British, and Olukoshi, a Nigerian.

Background to the NAI-Africa Collaboration

Despite its lack of a colonial past, Sweden has historically shown great interest in Africa. The country's involvement with Africa predates the colonial era and included the initiative of an 18th century Uppsala-based researcher who took his students to the continent to carry out fieldwork. A number of Swedish Christian missions were also established in Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The creation of the Nordiska Afrikainstitutet dates back to 1954, in the joint collaboration between Nordic libraries, which designated each Nordic country as a main depository for a region of the developing world. Denmark took the main responsibility for Asia, Finland for Russia, Norway for Latin America, and Sweden for Africa. As a result, the Uppsala-based library, Carolina Rediviva, was designated as the depository for literature on Africa. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Sweden established its development cooperation program with a focus on Ethiopia, South Africa, and Tanzania. The NAI was established in 1962 to support this policy effort, first as a documentation center and eventually as a research institute on African affairs for all the Nordic countries, which fund it through their development budgets.

The collaborative model, initiated by Gibbon, is at the core of NAI research programs and is written into the organization's mission statement. Research directors are given significant latitude to design their own research programs and create links with other research institutions. According to the NAI, Nordic scholars have historically been more progressive than other groups of European

¹All information regarding program development and administration is drawn from "Proposal for the Final Phase of Activity within the Framework of the Nordic Africa Institute's Programme on *The Political and Social Context of Structural Adjustment in Sub-Saharan Africa*" prepared by Adebayo Olukoshi, NAI, 1999, and information provided by Olukoshi and his program assistant, Solveig Hauser.

scholars. The content of the research and the links created by research directors are not dictated by the NAI. Typically, research programs run for three years, after which an external evaluation is carried out by independent scholars. Given a positive evaluation, the program may be extended for another three years. In the case of the NAI research program on structural adjustment, an evaluation of Phase One was carried out in 1994-1995. Due to the excitement that the initial findings generated, the program was extended for an additional six years, to the year 2000, making it a ten-year undertaking.

The NAI Research Program on Structural Adjustment.

The idea for the research program on structural adjustment arose from a 1987 workshop entitled “The IMF and the World Bank in Africa,” convened by the NAI and attended by senior researchers from the Nordic countries, the United Kingdom, and Africa. The participants concluded that, in the midst of the debate over the impact and effectiveness of structural adjustment, it was important to undertake an extended research program that would go beyond the ideologically driven debates and would broaden the discussion from what was considered a narrow focus on macroeconomics. As such, the content of the program was divided into a “socio-economic research network” and a “political research network.” The research program addressed three basic themes:

- The consequences of structural adjustment for the health, educational, industrial, agricultural, and services sector of African countries
- The structures and process of socioeconomic change associated with economic reform implementation
- The political impact of economic crisis and structural adjustment.

The NAI project has been collaborative at all phases. The concept document was drafted by NAI and was circulated throughout research institutions in the Nordic countries, Africa, and other institutions with ongoing structural adjustment projects, such as the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). The feedback was incorporated into a new concept paper and the project was subsequently advertised widely in various African media. In addition, the NAI made “sensitization” visits to Africa to brief researchers and institutions on the project and its intent. The proposals were shortlisted and reviewed by a selection panel. Once the research networks were constituted, further changes to the research priorities were made. Collaboration at the early stage of framing the research program seems particularly important given the fact that one of NAI’s objectives was to give African scholars the opportunity to help set the research agenda.

The NAI encouraged “scientific cooperation” between Nordic and African scholars by linking parties with similar research interests together at various points in the project. A number of the research reports are the joint product of African and Nordic researchers. Nordic scholars also participated as discussants and advisors for papers pertaining to their field of interest. This process not only provided an opportunity for members of the research community to network, but also provided both parties the opportunity to receive fresh insights into their topics.

The research program on structural adjustment is one of three core research programs at the NAI. It has received an annual allocation of 800,000 to 900,000 kronor (or approximately \$106,000 to \$120,000) from the core budget, about 75% of which represents salaries. However, it has received additional funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to cover expenses for fieldwork and conferences. This represents approximately 25% of the NAI research budget. Of these funds, about 50-60% went to cover the subsistence allowances of researchers.

The project is now in its final phase and the last of the studies are being completed and published. In hopes that the collaborative process will not end with the formal termination of the project, the program director is now planning to create issue-based working groups or “policy networks” that will operate autonomously. Groups of researchers associated with the program have organized in Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Niger. These groups will pull together researchers from within the country and/or regions.

One Nairobi-based group, involving researchers from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania was established in 1998 and is operating with financial assistance from the Ford Foundation’s East Africa office. Discussions are underway to establish a cooperative agreement between the working group on land issues set up by the Southern African Research Institute for Policy Studies (SARIPS) of Harare, Zimbabwe, and the Rural Development Studies Department of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. It is hoped that the other working groups will establish similar institutional arrangements with Nordic partners. The NAI will provide seed money to the working groups, but further funding will have to be raised by the groups themselves. The NAI is also seeking funding from the Africa Capacity Building Foundation in Harare, Zimbabwe, and the UNDP for additional support for follow-up activities.

Major Features of the NAI North-South Collaboration

The NAI research program on structural adjustment made a good effort in taking significant steps toward successful scholarly collaboration with respect to research methodology, information dissemination, and capacity building. Following is a brief survey of each of these major features of the collaboration.

(1) Methodology. Before work was initiated, the researchers participated in a workshop on methodological approaches to research on structural adjustment. This helped to ensure comparable output and helped to compensate, in some way, for any variance in capacity. There are three key features of the NAI approach that should be noted. It was empirical, longitudinal, and interdisciplinary. The majority of the projects involved field research using surveys, interviews, focus-group discussions, and observation techniques. Information gathered in the field was compared to conventional wisdom and the databases of international organizations to see whether the two sets of data agreed or diverged.

Longitudinal studies are often difficult to undertake due to resource constraints and methodological problems of retaining the original sample over time. However, such research provides some of the most revealing information regarding policy impacts on specific populations and can be particularly useful for policymakers. Longitudinal studies were carried out on topics such as the health impact of structural adjustment, the implications of economic reform for women informal sector workers, the dynamics of de-industrialization, and the evolving patterns of private trading activities. On average, the longitudinal studies spanned a five-year period. One project, “Gender and Agricultural Supply Responses to Structural Adjustment Programmes” by Grace Atiene Ongile, built on a study previously undertaken by two Danish researchers in 1985-1986. Ongile carried out her field research in 1995-1996 with the same population as the earlier study, thus providing a pre-SAP versus post-SAP comparison and a 10-year longitudinal study.

The NAI identified the lack of integration across disciplines as problematic in the African context. Given the wide-ranging societal impact of economic structural adjustment reforms, the subject dictated the need for an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, the NAI recruited researchers from a variety of disciplines including economics, agricultural economics, political science, sociology, social anthropology, history, gender studies, industrial relations, medicine, and international relations. Some researchers worked alone, but many of the reports are cooperative efforts of small groups of researchers from different academic backgrounds.

Perhaps the greatest influence of the interdisciplinary approach was on research methodology, particularly data collection and analysis. Different disciplines, and subfields within disciplines, tend to focus their analysis at different levels—for example, the macro/societal level versus the micro/household level. Such a predisposition influences the type of data that will be used. The NAI research reports use a wide variety of data sources and focus their analysis at varying levels. The combination of different research methods and techniques of data collection—quantitative analysis, literature reviews, surveys, direct observation, and others—would be unlikely had the project been wedded to a particular discipline. Given the paucity of interdisciplinary collaboration taking place in Africa, this project provided a valuable opportunity for the scholars involved. Since junior level researchers were used, the experience may influence their future work and make them more

likely to retain an interdisciplinary framework for their research.

(2) Information dissemination. The strongest aspect of the NAI collaborative effort lies with the information dissemination activities. The expressed purpose of these activities was to “bring the results of the research supported by the programme, especially their policy implications, to the attention of the relevant African and Nordic policy communities.”² The research findings have been disseminated through publications and through workshops and conferences. The studies have been published in the form of discussion papers, journal articles, research reports, and books. Later this year, a research report will be published synthesizing all aspects of the program and highlighting the implications of the findings for policy. All publications are subject to an anonymous peer review process prior to publication

The NAI has used conferences as a tool to disseminate research findings; fora for intellectual exchanges on the “state of the art” in major thematic areas; a platform for generating a common methodological approach; an opportunity for open peer review prior to the publication process; and an opportunity to bring together Northern and Southern counterparts in government and academia. Under the auspices of the program, 15 conferences and seminars have been organized in both the Nordic countries and Africa. The first major gathering took place in Copenhagen in December 1998, when the NAI and the Centre for Development Research (CDR/CUF) organized a conference dealing with the socioeconomic themes. The conference was attended by the policy community and academics. A forum was also held for NGOs and journalists. The participation of the NGO community increases the likelihood that information will reach communities, often the least informed about studies of which they are the subjects.

Two other major conferences are to be held this year. The first conference, Policy Perspectives for Socio-Economic Change in Contemporary Africa, is designed for African researchers to present their findings. It will most likely be held in Sweden, and the program will fund African participation. The second is a two-day conference to be held during the summer in Accra, Ghana, and which will include high-level officials from Africa and the Nordic countries, journalists, and researchers. Continuing on the theme of broadening the African research network, the NAI hopes that SARIPS, CODESRIA, and the UNDP Africa Bureau will be involved as cofacilitators. In the conference sessions, African policymakers will “respond” to the research findings and what implications they may have for policy.

Beyond the large conferences, small briefing meetings are being organized as part of the follow-up activities. In the Nordic countries, researchers in groups of four will hold small workshops with development agency officials and government officials, particularly those from the ministries of finance and foreign affairs. Similar meetings will be organized by members of the African research

² NAI proposal document, p. 6

networks targeting government officials, NGOs, and development agencies.

(3) Capacity building. The aim of building capacity among African researchers was integral to the planning of the structural adjustment research program from its earliest stages. All of the principal researchers and research assistants were drawn from African universities and research centers so both the individuals and the institutions could benefit. The researchers involved also had the opportunity of participating in international conferences and workshops. A particular emphasis was placed on recruiting junior to middle-level academics and women. This population of researchers was targeted with the aim of enhancing their research experience, as well as presentation and writing skills. Students were also used as research assistants, particularly for field interviews and data collection generally.

While information dissemination is an issue for all scholars and scholarly institutions, it has been noted that African scholars face particular difficulties in getting their work published. The NAI did exceptionally well in this area. As program coordinator, Peter Gibbon edited and wrote introductory chapters for edited volumes that were the output of conferences he had organized. Despite the appearance of Gibbon's name on several of the edited volumes, the NAI estimates that 90% of the manuscripts published under the program are the work of African scholars. Not only has this ensured wide distribution of African-generated research, it furthers the goal of capacity building.

Conclusion: The Production of Policy-Relevant Knowledge

Conducting policy-relevant research was a stated objective of the structural adjustment research program. Each report includes a section on policy implications and/or recommendations based on the results of the research. In her paper "A Point of View on Partnership," Marema Touré laments the gap between African scholars and practitioners.³ She urges the former to make concrete policy recommendations and to prescribe implementable projects. The extent to which the NAI study did this varied among the reports. Some of the recommendations were too vague—for example, to "consider gender in the policy making process." However, some of the reports made concise, viable recommendations. Furthermore, it is possible that policy prescriptions will result from the ongoing policy dialogue being established in the follow-up phase of the project.

While the form and process of the collaborative process are crucial, the ultimate goal of the program was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on structural adjustment. IMF- and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programs became widespread in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s. Despite variations, a few common threads ran through much of the research on the

³ Marema Touré, "A Point of View on Partnership", in *A New Partnership for African Development: Issues and Parameters*, eds. Henock Kifle, Adebayo Olukoshi and Lennart Wohlgemuth, Stockholm: NAI, 1997, p. 37.

impact of structural adjustment in Africa, resulting in some new knowledge on the subject. Three examples will illustrate this point.

(1) Structural adjustment has failed to achieve its objectives and has worsened the welfare and quality of life of large segments of the population in the countries studied. In general, poor people have less economic security, less access to basic social services, and declining income. In short, people are working harder for less. There is a significant body of literature that backs up this argument. The real contribution of the study is that it dissects the assumptions and the theory as presented by the Bretton Woods institutions and draws conclusions based on empirical evidence.

(2) Studies of structural adjustment must be micro-focused in order to arrive at a true understanding of its impact. The disaggregation of data and units of analysis allowed the study to provide new insights into the impact of SAPs. The studies differentiated men from women, rural from urban, small enterprises from large ones, and went into even greater detail in discussing specific economic activities. The notion that policies have differential impact, even on a focused group, allows the discourse to avoid the use of sweeping generalizations and allows a greater level of precision when outlining policy implications. Such disaggregated data are useful for policymakers and NGOs as well.

(3) Policies, particularly structural adjustment, must be undertaken with a gender perspective and attention must be paid to its consequences for different populations of women. The NAI endeavored to incorporate a gender perspective into all of the studies and the majority of the reports reflect this perspective. While it is commonplace for scholars to analyze any issue through the prism of race, ethnicity, and class, gender is often missing from the analysis. Gender perspectives have not been mainstreamed and, in many cases, can only be found in the works of "gender specialists." The gender specific analysis of the program output is a major contribution to the body of scholarly literature.

The NAI's scholarly pursuits into African affairs are taking place in the context of a much larger policy framework being pursued by the government of Sweden. The highest levels of the Swedish government are striving to create a new framework for African-Swedish relations. In January 1997 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, the NAI collaborated with the African Development Institute of the African Development Bank to convene a conference entitled "Partnership Africa." A small group of government officials, scholars, and members of the NGO community discussed and debated critical issues and guiding principles for a post-cold war, post-structural adjustment relationship. Similar consultations have taken place before and after the Abidjan meeting, with the hope that

encounters of this nature will assist the Swedish government as it seeks to formulate a more appropriate foreign policy for Africa, and obtain a strong mandate from the Swedish Parliament for implementing it.

Rarely has Africa been placed so squarely on the foreign policy agenda at such a high level. While scholarly collaboration is but one aspect of an overarching foreign policy, dialogue between scholars and policymakers will ensure increased participation by scholars in the policymaking process, and may provide the necessary support for the sustainability of collaborative research initiatives. The NAI experience cannot be understood independently of the long involvement of Sweden and the Nordic countries generally in supporting decolonization and development in Africa. It provides an interesting case study in best practice in North-South scholarly collaboration.

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The Indo-Dutch Program for Alternatives in Development*

Sujata Patel

The Indo-Dutch Program for Alternatives in Development (IDPAD) was conceived as a government-to-government program of joint collaborative research to understand and evaluate the development process that was being undertaken in India through state-initiated planning. It came into effect in December 1975 when a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Dr. J.P. Naik, then the Member-Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and Dr. Pronk, an eminent economist and then the Minister of Development Corporation of the Netherlands. Although the program began in 1975, its first phase could not be implemented until January 1981. Since then four phases have been completed, and the fifth one commenced in the year 2000.

The program's performance has been extremely impressive. In its 17-year history, the IDPAD program has sanctioned 91 projects of which 56 have been completed.¹ In addition to projects, it has disbursed grants for seminars as well as encouraged the exchange of scholars between the two countries. An attempt to set up a network of scholars who can research and work together on issues was made and helped ultimately to build an imposing publication list.² Altogether, IDPAD has published 35 books,³ 42 Occasional Papers,⁴ and also has started the publication of a newsletter, which has gone through 4 issues. Ninety-nine scholars have visited India and Holland on exchange programs.

The IDPAD program has also shown some administrative and intellectual flexibility. Over the years, it has evolved and has expanded its objectives and moved to define new themes for research. For example, while in the first phase, the themes were small-scale industrialization, dairy development projects, and women's studies; new themes titled Asian rural transformation and recent trends in European society were introduced in the second phase. In the third phase, a new theme titled ecology and development was added, which continues in the fourth and fifth phases. The themes of information and communication technologies as well as megacities have been introduced in the last phase.

The Argument

This paper makes an evaluation of this program and asks whether it can be termed a "best practices" program. It recognizes that IDPAD is one of the few unusual programs of research collabo-

* We would like to thank Rajni Kothari, Rina Burman-Chandra, Coordinator, IDPAD; S. Khandewale and Sanchita Dutta of IDPAD Secretariat, India; and Jan Breman, ex-Chairman, IDPAD Joint Committee; and Marc Verhagen, Secretary IDPAD, the Netherlands; for their cooperation and unhesitant sharing of information

¹In Phase One, of 17 projects sanctioned, 3 projects were on small-scale industrialization, 1 on export-oriented industrialization, 4 on multinationals, 1 on dairy development, and 8 on women's studies. In phase two 21 projects were sanctioned: 8 on new international economic order, 10 on comparative perspectives of Asian rural transformation, and 3 on recent trends in European society. In phase three, there were 10 on ecology and development, 6 on rural transformation in Asia, 4 on state and society, and 4 on international economic order. In the fourth phase out of 29 projects sanctioned, 8 were on environment and sustainable development, 6 on rural transformation, 8 on state and society, and 7 on international economy and institutional order.

²Initially, SAGE Publications, New Delhi, were contracted to publish the papers. Now IDPAD books are also published by Oxford University Press, Delhi, and as well as Vikas Publishing House and Manohar Publishers and Distributors, Delhi.

³Of 35 books published through 1999, 11 were written by Dutch scholars, 9 by Indians, and 15 jointly.

⁴Between 1988-98, of the 42 Occasional Papers published by IDPAD, 27 were written by Dutch scholars, 11 by Indians and 4 were jointly written.

ration in the world, which has laid down a visionary agenda for research and insisted that it be executed jointly. The program not only assesses the development process being undertaken in India but has also taken upon itself a task of creating a new language of social science to evaluate and appraise the processes of change, which it terms “development.”

It assumes that what has been taking place in India has been unlike the changes experienced by Europe and the former Soviet Union respectively and therefore should be considered as an “alternative” to the existing modes of development and change. It therefore enjoins the program to define new theories and as well as methodologies of interdisciplinary social science in order to understand and evaluate this process. This was indeed a revolutionary frame of reference for the 1970s and 80s when the social sciences were emphasizing specialization. In the present context when social science is increasingly setting itself a task to “cross boundaries” and to “open social sciences” to new theories and methodologies, we ask, To what extent does this program give us signposts to organize future programs of a similar nature? What can we learn from its successes and failures?⁵

In order to answer these questions, this paper revisits the agenda and vision of this program and in this context examines its practices and its extensive research and publication list. It makes an analysis of the nature of knowledge production that this program has encouraged. It argues that while the quality of each of these products is and remains extremely high, over time, these products together have not been able to actualize the vision encapsulated in the IDPAD agenda, defined in 1975 and reincarnated in 1977. It suggests that in phase two an attempt was made to achieve this goal.

However these efforts slowly ebbed and the network of scholars that had been established started fading out. Increasingly, from phase three onward the program lost its comparative⁶ reflexive character by which the macro themes connected up the specific research projects with micro questions and empirical investigations. Henceforth IDPAD defined its task and its practice in narrow and bureaucratic terms; doing research on discrete issues and/or evaluating particular development policies and programs, all of which need not necessarily be connected to each other. Inevitably the lack of organic unity led to a shift of emphasis from the interdisciplinary agenda toward an economic analysis and from qualitative methodologies towards quantitative data.

In the meantime, Indian social sciences moved on, defining interdisciplinarity and reflexive knowledge in different ways and exploring new themes like subalternity, communalism, and ethnicity, gender⁷ and cultural studies—none of which were reflected in the IDPAD register. In this new ambience, the concept and theory of “development” found minimal presence except, increas-

⁵See, for instance, the Ford Foundation project, *Crossing Boundaries*, as well as the Gulbenkian Foundation publication edited by Immanuel Wallerstein, *Open the Social Sciences* (Delhi: Vistaar, 1996).

⁶The highest number of comparative projects sanctioned was in the second phase when 11 out of 21 projects were of comparative nature. In the other phases, the proportion was the following: first phase: 4 out of 17; third phase: 7 out of 24; fourth phase, 7 out of 29.

⁷Women's studies find no place in the IDPAD agenda today. Also, the participation of women researchers is extremely low. In the first phase, because of 8 projects on the theme of women's studies, there was a 58% participation of women academics from India and 20% from Holland. This percentage decreased as women's studies did not find space in the next four phases, though some aspects of gender were studied in the themes of ecology and

ingly, as a mode of cultural concern. Additionally, the language of “alternatives” was also now reframed to engender a critique of science and modernity. IDPAD could not keep pace with these developments.

Why has this ambitious program reached this pass, we ask? The first two parts of this paper assesses the nature of knowledge production in terms of its agenda and asks why the program’s objectives have remained unrealizable in the latter phases. One of the problems, I suggest, is built into the vision statement of the agenda. Is it possible to create knowledge that can on one hand ask questions regarding foundational issues defining “development,” encouraging thereby reflexive perspectives, and on the other execute joint collaborative research that can simultaneously realize policy objectives?

It has increasingly become evident that these objectives cannot be combined as one, within social science research. In the 1960s and 70s when the regime of positivism defined the knowledge base of social sciences, and when notions such as social engineering had become popular, a belief that knowledge can be both reflexive and policy-oriented found some acceptance. Even today some of these questions remain relevant; e.g., a research project that can evaluate the impact of structural adjustment policies on the marginalized groups can produce both policy-oriented and reflexive knowledge. However when the questions move towards assessing the politics of such policies or their cultural and social implications or an assessment of the origin of such programs in terms of interest group politics, then such research would not necessarily be considered policy-oriented—especially when policy is defined in narrow terms such as that which pertains to donors’ interests. Praxiological initiatives can and do take place outside the state and therefore knowledge can be made an instrument of, for and on behalf of those who initiate social change both through the state and civil society institutions. Also, it is now fairly well accepted that cultural aspects do not necessarily fashion themselves to instrumental and policy initiatives, nor can instrumental knowledge make a comprehensive assessment of cultural practices.

Seen in this light, the objectives of IDPAD seem incompatible and cannot be realized as one goal. They promote different approaches towards research, elaborate different theories and institutional interests, and encourage different epistemological positions for social sciences. It is unfortunate that IDPAD did not develop an administrative system and a planning mechanism that could give space for the development of both these types of knowledge systems. In the absence of this plurality, a universalistic and highly synergistically-oriented goal definition was operationalized with the result that the challenging part of the IDPAD’s agenda was slowly allowed to lapse.

This paper also suggests that this built-in conflict of objectives was reinforced by two other anomalies. One is that while the focus of the program was on India, the financial inputs were mainly provided by Holland through its development funds. Second, there was a lack of recognition by the two partners, who were embarking on a journey of joint collaborative research, of the different

and distinctive histories of social science research and its administration in the two countries. These differences were associated with five separate factors: the range and focus of social science research in the two countries; variance in intellectual resources regarding the same; the size of the intellectual community; the nature of institutional arrangements regarding social science research in both countries; and the relationship between the state and social scientists.

I suggest that these factors created a major bottleneck in this program, making it bureaucratic, and helped push the emphasis of its agenda toward economics, policy-oriented research, and quantitative methodologies. On the Indian side, we argue that the administrative mechanism—the program being conducted by a government institution that had its own specific agenda and institutional priorities—opened it to numerous pressures and limitations. On the other hand it also opened the program to the influence of changing policy on social science set by various regimes. The absence of continuous visionary academic leadership, which believed and practiced interdisciplinary research, added to the difficulties making IDPAD another bureaucratic program managed by the Indian government. On the other hand the financial dependence of this program on the Netherlands, its organizational linkage to the Ministry of Overseas Development, as well as a lack of intellectual resources and capacity generation in the Netherlands in this area, has created anomalies of a different kind from that side. I discuss these aspects in part three of this paper. Part four is the conclusion.

IDPAD: History and Context

The initiation of the IDPAD program took place in a complex of social, political, and historical contexts, both in India and Holland. In Europe, after World War II, social science frameworks relating to processes of change of ex-colonial countries were being redefined to incorporate new developments as a result of decolonization and attempts at state-sponsored economic change. Two separate but related processes became the base for the establishment of IDPAD in Holland.

First, in the immediate postwar years, indological theories were replaced in Holland by the studies of nonwestern societies. Under the leadership of Professor Wim Wertheim at the University of Amsterdam, this led to the popularization of theories that assessed internal dynamics of nonwestern societies and encouraged a perspective that would support emancipation of the marginal groups repressed during and due to colonialism.⁸ In the beginning of the 1960s, when Indonesia, the former Dutch colony, became out of bounds for Dutch scholars, Professor Wertheim took the initiative of introducing India, and specifically South Gujarat, to his Dutch students. These initial attempts provided the first steps for the growth of academic networking among Dutch and Indian sociologists.

⁸ Jan Breman, "Sociology of Non-Western Societies at the Amsterdam University" (mimeo).

Second, social scientists in the Netherlands as in other European countries, following the lead of the economists, had introduced and started debating the notion of development and planned social change. These initiatives resonated in various institutional processes that were initiated to expand knowledge and practice of development as planned economic change by incorporating it in its curriculum, initiating research and encouraging doctoral work as well in establishing institutes like the Institute of Social Studies at The Hague.

Other links established through international and political networks between academics and scholars from both countries also aided the formation of the IDPAD program. In this context it is important to mention that the late economist Sukhamoy Chakravarty was a doctoral student of Professor Jan Tindberg at Rotterdam. However it was only when J.P. Naik and Sukhamoy Chakravarty at that time respectively Member-Secretary ICSSR and member, Planning Commission, and Jan Pronk, the Minister of Overseas Development, became personally involved in putting these ideas into practice, did the initial academic networking bear institutional fruit and the IDPAD program come into being.

To a significant extent, the agenda of IDPAD emerged out of the debates then taking place in India on the theory and practice of development. In the decades of the 60s and 70s, many eyes had been focused on India. It was not only the first nation-state to obtain independence but was also the first to carve out a “third path” of economic transformation, as distinct from the paths taken by the First and the Second Worlds. Social scientists in India had already started critically to evaluate the planning process and these formulations became part of the IDPAD agenda.

By the 70s, it was slowly being realized in India that planned development had failed to address the concerns of the masses and had therefore not been able to realize its goal. In point of fact, planning had acted to create further divisions among the Indian people, accentuating the differences between a small and privileged elite and the large numbers of disadvantaged groups. What were the reasons for this anomaly, it was asked. One argument highlighted the lack of financial resources, while the other suggested that a highly centralized bureaucratic structure and inefficient implementation were the causes. J P Naik ⁹ proposed that the answer was radically different. He argued that it was the lack of adequate social science language that was the cause of our confusions. Our assessment of the nature of causes of the failure of the planning process was mired in this epistemic difficulty. Naik contended that Indian social scientists had largely borrowed a social science language from the West. If the processes that India was undergoing were different and distinct, surely Indian social science had to develop a new language to understand and identify the processes and their problems. Naik wanted the IDPAD to play a major role in providing this framework.

IDPAD’s first Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 1975, incorporated a majority of these concerns. The MOU clearly stated that economic growth and efficiency should not be seen

⁹ *ICSSR Annual Paper*, 1977-78, pp. 25-6.

as competing with redistribution and equity. It wanted the research program to develop tools to evaluate and conceptualize the concept and paradigm most appropriate to evaluate these concerns. IDPAD as a social science research program would then contribute to the growth of “development” as a theory, science, and process instead of the contemporary idea of a mechanistic planned agenda. It is for this reason that the project made the concept of “alternatives” a key notion in its framework and placed it in its title. IDPAD defined alternatives of development as:

- A shift of perspective in the concept of development from connotations restricted to planning toward generating a holistic social science research
- A shift from defining development as an economic category restricted to the individual towards a conception of it in terms of social well-being of all
- Building a critique of the existing theories, practices, and methodologies of development in this context
- Developing research methodologies to do multi- and interdisciplinary research in order to understand issues of equity with growth and participation
- Research to be policy relevant

Though the memorandum was signed in 1975, the IDPAD program went into a freeze for nearly six years due to many bureaucratic¹⁰ and political reasons such as the “Emergency,” two changes in government, and changes in ICSSR’s top management. However, the post-Emergency period provided the context for reframing the social science agenda in India and this affected the ICSSR. As the IDPAD program was part of the ICSSR structure, this initiative also made possible the revival of the IDPAD program. This effort was given a fillip (push, nudge?) by the personal commitment of Rajni Kothari and T.N. Madan, then the Chairman and Member Secretary of ICSSR, and Jan Breman, a scholar who had been in India as part of Wertheim’s team and had continued to have interest in India.

A meeting between Indian and Dutch delegations took place in New Delhi in 1977. It was then decided that both countries would present “position papers” to highlight the current state of social science research and evolve strategies for further cooperation. Certain administrative decisions were also taken; the Institute for Social Science Research in Developing Countries (IMWOO) in Holland, located under the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation, was now asked to act as a counterpart of the ICSSR.¹¹

At this juncture there was a slight change in IDPAD agenda. In the new ambience, it was necessary to reflect on what Kothari called “the widely prevalent disillusionment with economic plan-

¹⁰ There is a story that the file of IDPAD papers was found in a drawer of a bureaucrat in Holland who had placed it there and forgotten about it.

¹¹ On January 1, 1997, the IDPAD program was shifted from IMWOO under NUFFIC to WOTRO, the Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research which forms part of Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NOW).

ning, political processes and failed possibilities of social change.”¹² He proposed the study of the possibility of radical decentralization of institutional structures whereby a dialogue is initiated between the local and central structures of power. This orientation was reflected in the IDPAD’s agenda when it was decided to introduce a critical notion of development and to study not only economic issues in planning but the political system and cultural issues as well. Contemporary inequities, T. N. Madan, IDPAD’s first cochairman, suggested, were a continuation of received traditions. He therefore felt the need to do comparative research between Holland and India in order to assess similarities and differences in both countries over time.¹³ Also, all three initiators wanted development to be studied and analyzed in terms of the global system. All these concerns were reflected in the themes of the second phase.

IDPAD: 1980s and Onwards

The changes mooted by Kothari, Madan, and Breman took time to institutionalize. In the meantime their involvement and commitment to the program made possible the start of IDPAD at the bureaucratic level. Themes chosen earlier became the basis for initiating the program and sanctioning projects in the first phase, which started in 1981. Seventeen research projects were sanctioned in this phase. These projects attempted to document and evaluate the positive contributions of industrialization to Indian development and analyzed the successes of state-initiated development projects in the Indian context.

In this phase the committee sanctioned projects of two kinds. One evaluated the benefits of the new industrial policy especially on employment generation by small-scale industry and assessed the impact of multinationals on Indian industrialization. (Four such research projects evaluated the impact of mixed economy). Second, an effort was made to examine indigenously-designed rural development programs in order to assess their impact on the lives of the people. By the 70s, the dairy development program in India had become well known as an indigenous program of rural reconstruction. It was also linked to international finance and had become integrated with the European Commission programs. This research project thus attempted to combine an assessment of the “alternatives of development,” experiments of development having structural roots in Indian experience with its new linkages in international finance. Last, with the release of the paper on the Status of Women in 1975, the gender dimension of development also became a focus of IDPAD.

From the second phase onward a new definition of development and alternatives was initiated.

¹² Some of Kothari’s ideas on development are elaborated in a book of essays titled *Democratic Polity and Social Change in India: Crises and Opportunities* (New Delhi: Allied, 1976).

¹³ T.N. Madan, *Proposal for the Indo-Dutch Cooperation Program on Alternatives in Development 1980-81*, The Hague, New Delhi: IMWOO/ICSSR, February 11, 1980.

Supporting this new definition were noneconomists who had much earlier concluded that development as a state program to reduce inequalities had received a setback in India. It could no longer be perceived as a universal, linear, and uniform process of change. They therefore argued that IDPAD should not restrict its agenda to an examination of policies and issues related to development planning in India, but must evolve and develop a critical understanding of an alternate paradigm of development. This requires historical analysis of the transformation process taking place in India and comparison with other countries and regions of South and Southeast Asia as well as Europe.

Phase Two inaugurated a new and ambitious project for IDPAD, in which J. P. Naik's earlier vision was extended and redefined. Henceforth, IDPAD's agenda was to encourage the comparative historical analysis of change. Development was now defined to include the entire transition process and "alternatives" was understood to mean a new paradigm of change. It was now redefined as social and progressive change, which takes place over centuries, over continents and over differing systems. An interdisciplinary perspective was encouraged which attempted to analyze historical, cultural, geographical aspects of development over the *longue durée* in India, Asia, and the countries of the north.

Second, in this phase, the program changed the conceptual language of IDPAD to redefine collaboration. In this phase, the program did not concentrate and focus only on the Indian experience and make it the index for defining development. Alternatives and development now encompassed research about the entire subcontinent, Southeast Asia and European societies. The program made possible the inversion of knowledge construction and the freeing of knowledge from political boundaries.

In this phase, some of the old themes continued, but the projects that were sanctioned incorporated the notion of "criticality." Nine projects on the impact of technology, multinational corporations, and debt problem and stabilization policies were sanctioned under the theme of new international economic order. These evaluated the new and emerging inequities in the global system and examined the ongoing "development setback" debate in context of the global economy and the structural adjustment policies of Third World countries. The question of South-South cooperation formed the focus for one of the major projects.

The major focus of the IDPAD in this phase was on the theme of Asian rural transformation (ART). ART focused on understanding the patterns of growth, social and economic changes and peoples' mobilization in agrarian structures of developing countries such as India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. The case studies on the theme of ART encompassed issues such as management of rural technology programs, small farm development, class formation, property relations, peasant mobility, and the role of rural institutions in the development of rural economies. These studies also investigated the influences of "cultural" and "social" elements in defining devel-

opment and analyzed the access of deprived groups in society to such programs; for instance the caste-class-gender nexus in the Indian rural context. Such an analysis was based on the belief that studies with a cross-country perspective would provide a deeper understanding of structural specificities of existing societies. It was also thought that only such a perspective would make possible a meaningful policy change and implementation.

In this phase, IDPAD also introduced a theme called recent trends in European societies. In this theme three projects by Indians were sanctioned. Europe came to be viewed through an Indian lens. This change was radical because there was an attempt to invert the received colonial traditions of knowledge production. The three projects investigated the conceptual basis of welfare state and its socioeconomic programs in United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and France.

From the third phase onward (1988-1993), this received orientation started disappearing as projects were sanctioned without evaluating how together they advanced IDPAD's agenda of developing a new social science language. In this phase, though, an attempt was made to continue the earlier agenda by introducing a new theme, ecology and development. Research projects concerning the urban poor, their access to housing, and women's access to socioeconomic opportunities were approved, although there was no unifying thread linking these researchers. An extremely innovative project that used the Dutch model of calculating fiscal costs of industries generating environmental pollution (such as fertilizer production) was sanctioned. This research brought together accountants, statisticians, environmentalists, and nongovernmental organizations, symbolizing the new orientation of the program: the use of quantitative methodologies to assess the quality of life. The manifest goal in this phase was to understand linkages between development programs initiated by the state, increasing environmental crisis, and peoples' agency in realizing sustainable ecological development. Some projects assessed the role played by voluntary organizations in development. Yet all this did not add up to more than discrete research inquiries.

The fourth phase began in 1993 and was completed in 1998. Twenty-nine research projects were sanctioned. IDPAD approved projects on the themes of environment and sustainable development, rural transformation, state and society, and international economic and institutional order. The projects analyzed issues of sustainable growth, environment, employment, resource management, grassroots initiatives, and institutions of self-governance as strategies and instruments of sustainable development.

In this phase, IDPAD encouraged inter-regional comparative studies. Issues such as food security, public distribution systems, changing relations between the state, analysis of the role of nongovernmental organizations, and impact of developmental schemes such as irrigation and employment generation on people were sanctioned. One project analyzed critically the changing role of state in urban development in the context of unplanned growth in the cities. A couple of studies also focused on developing a legal context for cooperation between countries of the subcontinent

on issues of water management. The gender dimension of environment and sustainable development was also explored in terms of drawing on women's daily experiences to develop strategies for a better resource-use management. Another project analyzed the effect of big development projects on displacement. Again, none of these projects, including the comparative inter-regional studies, raised issues of social science language. That seemed not to be the goal.

The fifth phase, beginning from 1999, is focusing on the following themes: employment and social security, population and health, urban and rural environment, megacities, and information and communication technologies.

An analysis of the third and fourth phase reveals that some interesting and intellectually stimulating projects were sanctioned. However it is clear that there was no coherence among them as there was during the second phase. In the earlier phase, a set of macro questions regarding change determined the sanctioning of micro studies. A majority of the studies were empirical in nature. These attempted to combine research methods, theoretical perspectives, and disciplines in order to utilize a wide variety of qualitative and quantitative data. Also there was a network of scholars working toward answering these questions. For instance, in the research projects on the theme of Asian rural transformation, political scientists and economists worked with anthropologists combining participant observation and fieldwork with quantitative analysis and historical perspective. Because of this interdisciplinary orientation and comparative-historical perspective, it was possible to obtain detailed information on land ownership, access to education, migration, income, and employment and relate it to caste and class inequities in rural societies.

Such comparative questions could not be asked of the projects in the third and fourth phases. In the next section, we examine why this hiatus was built between the second and the third and fourth phases. I explain this by analyzing the administrative and financial structure of the IDPAD in context of different and distinctive histories of the two partners.

IDPAD: Issues in/of its Practice

At the same time that Rajni Kothari was suggesting that the model of development was highly dependent on the West and that a critique was in order, Pieter Van Stuijvenberg, then the Secretary of IDPAD on the Dutch side, was describing a basic difference in the development approach in the two countries. In India the issue involves satisfaction of the basic needs of the population and daily survival, whereas in the Netherlands, a developed nation, it implies adjustment to and of existing policies. Therefore the notion of development could not be an index for comparison between India and the European societies.¹⁴

¹⁴Pieter van Stuijvenberg, "Alternatives in the ICSSR/IMWOO Programme: Some Possible Directions to Proceed." n.d.

Such variations in perception were not the program's only problem. There were other structural differences between the participating groups. Social science knowledge about India in the Netherlands was not highly developed. Two groups of social scientists there had some interest in participating in the IDPAD program. The first was a group with the schools of nonwestern studies in various universities who had done research on Indonesia and in the Caribbean region with which the Dutch had colonial relationships. The second was a group of economists who had been converted to the theory of development, who specialized in the development programs of various countries. The first brought the sensitivity of anthropological research and an assessment of localities and regions in their own terms to the program, and the second a commitment to comparison between countries. Both groups were, with some individual exceptions, bereft of detailed knowledge regarding Indian history and cultural traditions. However, among the entire group of social scientists in the Netherlands, these formed a minority. Holland was not interested in studying India's development process. In India, on the other hand, the entire social science community was a potential user of the IDPAD program. Indian social science had more stake in the program.¹⁵

In these circumstances, it is no coincidence that IDPAD was housed in the ICSSR. There was a similarity of goals and of personnel.¹⁶ The ICSSR¹⁷ was mandated by the Indian state to encourage and organize social science research and as well to define the terms of a new social science language for India. It was to provide the necessary institutional mechanisms to do research and also evaluate the planning process. ICSSR was also in search of foreign funding to finance its projects and realize its agenda. The IDPAD program provided a major source for realizing the general goals of the ICSSR. It is no surprise, therefore, that the chair of the IDPAD was the chair of the ICSSR and its coordinator, a senior official of the ICSSR (a position later titled the Executive Director, International Division). An academic advisory committee guided its work, a significant number of whom also sat on the ICSSR council. The full council of the ICSSR assisted in managing IDPAD, with its implementation in the hands of a secretariat located in the ICSSR office.

The situation was vastly different in Holland. First, only a very small group of academics were either experts on India or nonexperts interested in doing research there. Second, a close relationship of the kind that existed between the ICSSR and the Indian state was not found in Holland. Social science in Holland was not organized in such a unitary fashion nor was its agenda formulated in this manner.¹⁸

IDPAD was housed initially in IMWOO, the Institute of Social Science Research in Developing Countries. IMWOO was located under the Netherlands Organization for International

¹⁵It would be no surprise to note at this juncture that in the first and second phase projects mainly coordinated by Indians were sanctioned.

In the first phase out of 17 projects sanctioned only one was by a Dutch scholar, while in the second phase 15 out of 21 were by Indians. See note 25.

¹⁶There were other reasons also. When the agreement was signed, J.P.Naik was ICSSR's Member-Secretary and in due course, Sukhamoy Chakravarty became its Chairman.

¹⁷The ICSSR was set up in 1968. Today it has 27 affiliated institutes which conduct research on various issues regarding development. More than half of them are economic development institutes.

¹⁸From the early 70s on a group of academics close to the CPI, a party supporting the Indira Gandhi regime, took control of the policy direction in the ICSSR. Sukhomay Chakravarty was part of this group.

Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC). Through NUFFIC the financial grants from the Dutch government were channeled. For the Dutch its location was of strategic importance as IMWOO was the body through which grants for international fieldwork were obtained. Later on it was transferred to WOTRO, the Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research, which forms part of Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NOW), changing the orientation of the program.

Third, the program in Holland was led by a steering committee mainly consisting of researchers, including those who participate in the projects. In addition there was a core committee made up of researchers who participate in the projects which advises the Joint Committee, consisting of the two chairs, the two coordinators and two appointed members. Since the fourth phase, the chair of the Joint Committee was the chair of IDPAD India, who is also the chair of ICSSR. It seemed that the ICSSR found in the IDPAD program a convergence of motives and intentions, as well as a way to realize its mandate of doing research on India by utilizing foreign funds.

There were other differences between ICSSR and IMWOO. In order to realize its mandate the ICSSR had sponsored and was partially funding the establishment and expansion of various social science research institutes oriented purely toward research. The universities remained outside this framework and its governance was the sole responsibility of the University Grants Commission. It is no coincidence that many of the projects sanctioned by IDPAD were directed by faculty based in these research institutes, more specifically the institutes that specialize in developmental economics. IMWOO mainly dealt with academics in the university structure, whose concerns connect up the learning process with knowledge production.¹⁹

The fifth major difference between the two partners related to an understanding of policy and development programs. For the ICSSR, “development” was a large umbrella word that incorporated particular policies, policies of the state, a perspective of change, and as well a social science language. To the Dutch, policy orientation was more specific and related to the financial inputs made by the Dutch government in terms of aid.²⁰ Initially the Dutch government kept IDPAD program at a distance from the evaluation of specific aid projects. The officials, Dick Bols suggests in the first IDPAD evaluation paper, accepted that IDPAD knowledge need not necessary be of short-term instrumental use.²¹

However, for the Dutch government the policy orientation of IDPAD remained a priority. The Dutch government gave a significant proportion of grants to IDPAD—on average, about 90% of the total funds of the IDPAD program come from the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation and only 10% from the ICSSR. This put pressures on the academic content of the

¹⁹ As a result a large number of Dutch projects had a built-in grants for doctoral students.

²⁰ The Dutch had not invested the amount as an educational and cultural program.

²¹ Dick Bols, “General Observations From the Dutch Side of the Program, in an Evaluation of the Indo-Dutch Program on Alternatives in Development (IDPAD),” CDP, Utrecht, November, 1983, pp. 77-79.

program.²²

While a close-knit groups of elite Dutch and Indian scholars was supervising the program, this control remained in the background. Paradoxically the demand for making IDPAD accessible to all potential scholars ²³ resulted in a growing importance of the policy issue, because control then shifted to the bureaucrats on both sides. It is no surprise that the MOU of the upcoming phase notes the need to keep certain separate funds for the evaluation of aid-driven projects in IDPAD. The dependence on this source for funding also created another liability. There was no longer an advantage in studying European societies or an interest in capacity development in India on resources regarding European societies. Also more significantly the Dutch control of non-research grants gave them a potential power in defining the themes of each phase as well as topics for seminars and workshops.²⁴

On the Indian side, the eclipse of strong academic leadership in ICSSR affected IDPAD and reinforced the above-mentioned developments. As noted earlier, IDPAD was originally conceived as a research program designed primarily to benefit researchers in India who wanted to study development. It was later redesigned to encourage comparative research in European countries. These changes were made possible by the strong academic leadership provided by two teams on the Indian-Dutch side, first led by Naik, Chakravarty, and Pronk and the second led by Kothari, Madan, and Breman.

The growing control by contemporary regimes, which appointed favorites to bodies such as ICSSR, diluted the leadership of IDPAD, and made it open to political and bureaucratic pressures. These developments affected both the academic content and the practices defining the program. Not only were there long delays in approving projects but also the approval of themes for each phase became a long drawn-out process (taking more than two years), with nonacademics determining what constitutes good research. In these circumstances academic input received short shrift and certain themes were not included in the agenda, such as religious violence, which has been the main source of conflict in India since early 1980s.

²² In the 1980 MOU it was decided that the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs would finance all of the research projects in Holland and in India by Dutch scholars and of Indian scholars respectively under the rubric of Technical Assistance. The ICSSR contributed 50 percent of the research costs in India for the Indian-initiated research projects. The Indian contribution is generally restricted to research projects. The Netherlands pays for the nonproject activities (seminars, exchange of scholars, exchange of literature, commissioned papers, publications, contingencies), and implementation costs (Joint Committee meetings, travel and lodging, salary costs, operational costs), besides contributing in a major way to the funding of research projects and the Working Fund.

In the first phase, the IDPAD budget was 2.6 million Dfl. The following is the contribution made by the two partners in the various phases.

Phase	Indian contribution (Rs.)	Dutch contribution (Dfl.)
II	927,050	2,627,445
III	2,344,791	6,229,614
IV	4,556,000	9,361,429

²³ From the third phase onward project proposals were invited through advertisements placed in two journals. Also an effort was made to encourage proposals from institutes based in nonmetropolitan regions. Over the years there has been a dispersal of research capacity from metropolitan-based institutions in India to institutions in other cities.

²⁴ One of the oft-repeated allegations of the Indian academic community is the control exercised by the Dutch on the IDPAD. It is difficult to judge the veracity of this allegation without a case-by-case review of the decisionmaking process. However this issue needs to be seen in context of a) the smallness of the user academic community in Holland b) the potentially large academic community of users in India and c) the fact that after the second phase joint projects were given preference while in the first two phases the Indian promoters projects were sanctioned. (See note 16.) Given the close networks established by those who controlled ICSSR it is possible that this control and bias was also that of the Indian academic community managing the IDPAD.

What did the IDPAD achieve from its agenda, given the pulls and pressures from the various lobbies that existed in both academic worlds? It was able to realize one goal of the three in its agenda, that of joint collaboration. In the earlier phases a large number of projects were conducted singly either by Dutch or Indian investigators. However in some senses these were joint projects because there was an organic unity among themes with different researchers handling various aspects of the theme and sometimes doing comparative studies. From phase three onward this model of joint project was replaced by a bureaucratic definition, which enjoined the IDPAD committee to favorably consider those projects that were jointly executed. As a result from phase three on, jointly administered projects increased.²⁵ In no way did this move lessen the structural inequities between Indian and Dutch counterparts; it merely clothed them in a different way. One analysis suggests that the labor and time input from the Indian side in such projects were more than twice that of the Dutch.²⁶

The major casualty of these strains was a reflexive agenda of the program, its continent comparative orientation, and its thematic unity. In the context of such differing histories, varying expectations among lobbying groups, and discrete intellectual locations, how could joint research be conducted? Unfortunately the lack of reflexivity mentioned above seems to permeate even the planning and administrative structure of IDPAD. Only the first evaluation paper made a sociological evaluation of the project. IDPAD has no administrative mechanism that can understand its own history and resources in order to plan for its future. If it had it could have ensured the implementation of its own agenda.

Concluding Remarks

What is research collaboration? How do international research collaborations produce new knowledge? IDPAD's experience gives us some lessons in understanding its dynamics. International research collaborations have to be sensitive to the following issues:

1. There is a historically received division of knowledge and its resources between colonized and noncolonial Western countries. This context affects the nature of research collaboration and its built-in structures.
2. Given these inequities, all research projects should make for provision of capacity-building

²⁵ An analysis of the first phase suggests that most of the principal researchers and research assistants were Indian. In this phase, there was hardly any collaborative research from the Indians and the Dutch together and only one research project from the Dutch side was sanctioned. It was only in the third phase, however, that there was an increase in the number of joint Indian-Dutch initiated projects. In this phase, there were 32 [Indian?] senior or principal researchers to that of 27 Dutch and 28 junior researchers to 13 of Dutch side, a 60:40 ratio. In addition, project directors from both countries supervised 13 of the 24 projects. This pattern repeated itself in the fourth phase when 21 of the 29 approved projects had both Indian and Dutch project directors.

²⁶ In an analysis of 9 projects, it was found that Indian partners contributed toward 77% of the work and the Dutch toward 37% of the work.

with both partners. Capacity-building strategies of each partner would be different depending on the specificity of knowledge base of the academic community.

3. Questions regarding developing new social science language should be part of all collaborative research.
4. Given the boundaries in the dissemination of knowledge and its location within geographic barriers, research projects should make available residencies in each of the countries in order to facilitate intellectual encounters.
5. Research needs to be related to its long-term gains; it has to make an impact on learning, teaching, curriculum building as well as constructing a new generation of researchers. It can not be seen in terms of its instrumentalities, short-term gains, and donor needs.
6. Large projects using government mechanisms need to develop institutional structures that respond to immediate problems. All decision-making should be in the hands of academics and not bureaucrats.
7. Unitary administrative structures should not be used in projects relating to knowledge production.