

# The development track and academic practice of Sociology in Sichuan in the past 40 years

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**Abstract:** *This paper makes a comprehensive analysis of the recovery, reconstruction and development of Sichuan sociology in the past 40 years. This paper makes a simple analysis of the development stages of Sichuan sociology, and holds that there are two major stages, namely, the restoration and reconstruction stage and the academic research stage. This paper makes an in-depth investigation of the characteristics and achievements of the academic practice of Sociology in Sichuan in the past 40 years, especially in the study of religious and ethnic issues. At the same time, we also realize that there are shortcomings in discipline construction, research team, research field, etc., and there is still a big gap with the eastern region and foreign sociology research. This requires Sichuan sociology to form a joint research force, maintain its advantageous research field, broaden its research horizon and actively build a high-level research team, so as to better promote the development of Sichuan sociology.*

**Keywords:** *Sichuan Sociology, Academic Construction, Academic Practice*

## 1. Introduction

In 1979, Comrade Deng Xiaoping put forward at the party's theoretical work retreat: "The study of political science, law, sociology, and world politics, we have neglected for many years, and now we need to make up lessons quickly." [1] This started the process of the restoration and reconstruction of Chinese sociology, and sociology re stepped on the academic stage, from the state to the local, began to speed up the process of the construction of sociology. The development of Sichuan sociology relies on the restoration and reconstruction of Chinese sociology. With the efforts of many sociological researchers, Sichuan sociology has made great progress in the past 40 years.

## 2. Restoration and reconstruction of Sociology in Sichuan

It has been more than 20 years since the abolition of Chinese Sociology in 1952 and the reconstruction of the discipline of reform and opening up. Due to the long-term stagnation, the discipline has basically no development, which leads to the arduous and difficult task in the early stage of reconstruction. The reconstruction of Sociology in Sichuan also faces many problems, such as lack of talents and teaching materials. It can be said that the discipline construction of Sociology in Sichuan is more difficult than other disciplines. Under such circumstances, how to train sociology professionals and establish a relatively perfect discipline system as soon as possible has become the top priority in the construction of sociology in Sichuan. On the basis of reviewing the history of the restoration and reconstruction of Chinese sociology and the development of Sichuan sociology, the author thinks that the restoration and reconstruction of Sichuan sociology is from 1980 to 1985. Based on this, the author tries to summarize the characteristics of Sichuan sociology in the recovery and reconstruction stage from the following aspects.

The basic construction of disciplines is basically completed. Mr. Fei Xiaotong once pointed out that the construction of the discipline of sociology requires the basic conditions of "the internal organs", and these basic conditions are the prerequisites. The so-called "five internal organs" refer to the establishment of sociological societies, establishment of research institutions, establishment of sociology departments, establishment of book reference centers, and specialized publications and publishing institutions. [2] Therefore, since 1980, the whole country began to construct the sociological infrastructure from these five aspects, and so did Sichuan. From 1981 to 1983, the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences, Chengdu Academy of Social Sciences, Chongqing Academy of Social Sciences and other scientific research institutions established sociological research institutions, and the Sichuan Sociological Society was established in 1983. [3] Sociology in colleges and universities was set up later than scientific research

institutions. In 1984, Sichuan University took the lead in setting up a sociology research office and began to train sociology professionals.

Preliminary construction of the discipline system. The author believes that the construction of Sichuan sociology is largely influenced by famous sociologists such as Fei Xiaotong and Lei Jieqiong. And under their influence, they continue to enrich and improve the sociology disciplines. In 1982, Professor Fei Xiaotong pointed out at the Sichuan Provincial Sociology Preparatory Meeting that sociology should be closely integrated with China's reality and serve socialist construction. It can be said that this has pointed out the direction for the development of Sichuan sociology and even the development of Chinese sociology. In 1983, Professor Lei Jieqiong came to Sichuan to make a report on "New System of Chinese Sociology under the Guidance of Marx Theory". Learning should not only study practical problems, but also study its own theories." [4] This further refines the research direction of sociology and points out that it is necessary to strengthen the research of Marxist theoretical sociology and use Marxist theory to guide the development of sociology. It can be said that this has deeply affected the development and research paradigm of Sichuan sociology. The discipline construction of Sichuan sociology adheres to Marxism, based on the actual situation of Western Sichuan, meets the needs of social development in Sichuan, and establishes main disciplines and branches, including religious sociology, Ethnic Sociology, rural sociology and so on. By the mid-1980s, the discipline system of Sichuan sociology had taken shape, which laid a solid foundation for the continuous improvement of the discipline system of Sichuan sociology.

Pay attention to solving social problems faced by reform and opening up. During this period, the problems concerned by sociology were almost brought about by the reform and opening-up. Reform and opening-up promoted social changes, and also spawned more social problems.[5] Based on the background of reform and opening up and the actual situation of Sichuan province, Sichuan sociological research has carried out a series of social investigations, mainly focusing on rural areas, families and youth. For example. Family Planning and the Development of National Economy-Investigation in Jiangjin County, Sichuan Province, Survey Data Set of Sichuan Rural Families, Survey of Rural Families and Farmers' Lifestyle, Survey of Young Farmers, etc.

### **3. The "Research" Phase of Sichuan Sociology**

According to the views of Professor Wenliang Liang and Researcher Zhao Xishun, the development of Sichuan sociology was mainly in the period of restoration and reconstruction before 1985. In 1986, Sichuan sociology entered this stage of research. The author thinks that in 1985, the whole framework of Sichuan sociology was basically completed. Although some social surveys were carried out at this stage, the real research stage only started in 1986, which can be roughly divided into three stages.

#### ***3.1 The previous theoretical discussion***

The reports made by Professor Fei Xiaotong in 1982 and Professor Lei Jieqiong in 1983 can be said to have played a vital role in the development of Sichuan sociology, and are of great significance to the development of disciplines and the perfection of discipline system. The author believes that before 1985, Sichuan Sociology was more insisting on the research methods proposed by the two scholars, and on this basis, it continued to improve the discipline system and guide some social investigations. However, changes have taken place after 1985. Sichuan sociology is more concerned with major issues such as Marxist sociological theories and sociological localization, focusing on the tradition of guiding sociological research and how to localize sociology.

First, the research on the traditional problems of Marxist sociology. The mainstream view is that the tradition of Marxist sociology is contained in the thought of historical materialism. Although Marx never regarded him as a sociologist, the academic circles generally believe that there are two sociological traditions, one is the western sociological tradition, and the other is the tradition of sociological research initiated by Marx. At this time, Sichuan sociological circles generally paid attention to Marxist sociological tradition, but paid less attention to Western sociological tradition, focusing on its research methods and related technologies, and more energy was devoted to the study of Marxist sociology, which deeply analyzed its intrinsic value, significance and principles. For example, Zhao Xishun, a researcher, and many other Sichuan sociological researchers have profoundly realized that historical materialism is Marxist sociological theory, but historical materialism itself is not sociology. On the basis of clarifying the Marxist sociological tradition, Sichuan sociology has not stopped studying it, but more and more researchers have used this tradition to guide research and how to develop Marxism in their own countries

and regions. The tradition of socialism is a lifelong mission.

There are several voices about the localization of sociology. The research on the localization of sociology continues to carry out the development of Sociology in China, and the research on this issue is the most prominent in the 1980s and 1990s, [6] this is not only the focus of Chinese sociological research, but also the focus of Sichuan sociological research institute. On the basis of comprehensive analysis of Sichuan sociology's research on localization, Prof. Literature Liang summed up four main voices: First, the development of Sichuan sociology must take Mao Zedong Thought as the starting point, and the research done under this thought can truly achieve localization and serve China's social construction. The author believes that the reason for those who hold this view may be that Mao Zedong Thought is an important result of the Sinicization of Marxism, and it is a thought that Marxism is closely integrated with Chinese practice and China's national conditions. It insists on starting from Mao Zedong Thought and guiding society. By learning, we can achieve the localization of sociology. Second, this view believes that Marxist theory, principles, and methods should be combined with Chinese practice. Sociological research must make full use of Marxism and conduct research based on national conditions in order to localize sociology. In my opinion, the first and the second views are similar. In essence, they both emphasize taking Marxism as the theoretical guidance of research and carrying out research in combination with China's actual situation. Thirdly, it mainly emphasizes that the localization of sociology should come from China's practice, summarize and discover the law of social operation in practice, and establish sociological theory in line with the local conditions. Fourthly, it mainly explains how to realize the localization of sociology from the perspective of culture. It can be said that these four views analyze how to localize sociology from different perspectives. The author believes that localization does not mean overthrowing the discipline and establishing a new discipline, but grasping the essential attributes of the discipline and exploring the universality and particularity of Chinese society on the premise of adhering to the inherent logic and rules of the discipline.

### ***3.2 Social development and religious sociology research***

Since the reform and opening up, great changes have taken place in China's social structure, with rapid economic development, accelerated social mobility and more obvious social stratification. "Reform and opening up has brought opportunities for China's development, but it has also brought many risks, and social problems are frequent. It can be said that the whole society has entered a risk society." [7] The problems of modernity brought about by reform and opening up have become the focus of sociological research. At the same time, the study of religious issues during this period has also become an important indicator, and many influential scholars have emerged in the entire sociological field. [8]

The main research directions of sociology at this stage include social order, social mobility, social stratification and other issues. Sichuan sociological circles also found these problems acutely, almost in line with the direction of Chinese sociology research, but in the specific research areas are different, Sichuan sociology research more based on the situation of the province. Sichuan, as a province with large population and large agriculture, has a huge population flow in the reform and opening-up. It is also today. At the same time, it is a large province with multi-ethnic groups. The development of ethnic areas, religious beliefs and so on have become the focus of Sichuan sociology research. Academic seminars have been held for many times to discuss the problems encountered in social development. From October 25 to 27, 1989, the Society of Sociology of Sichuan Province and the Economic and Social Development Research Association of Nanxi County of Sichuan Province jointly held a theoretical seminar on "Rural Sociology", which focused on the problems of population mobility, land problems and crime rate in rural areas of Sichuan since the reform and opening up, and made a special study on how to realize rural development. [9]

At the same time, the study of religious issues is also a key field of Sichuan sociology during this period and even now. Many master-level scholars have emerged, such as Zhang Shiwen, Chen Linshu, Yuan Yayu, and Chen Changwen. During this period, the sociologists in Sichuan did a lot of research on religious sociology, carried out many large-scale investigations, and published many influential monographs nationwide, such as Yuan Yayu's general theory of religious sociology.

Looking at the development of Sichuan sociology in this period, the author thinks that its research focuses mainly on rural social development, social order and religious studies. The research in this period has also made a pioneering work for the future Sichuan sociology research, and many research fields have become the key direction of Sichuan sociology research.

### **3.3 Research on social risk and social construction**

Indeed, this period has inherited the research fields of the previous stage to a large extent, made a lot of efforts in the research of rural social development, social order and religious research, and made good achievements. At the same time, an important feature of this stage is the pluralism of research direction, including poverty, National issues, harmonious society construction Community research and other aspects. [10] At this stage, many valuable studies emerged in Sichuan sociology. For example, Chen Changwen's "Research on the Development and Construction of Belief Communities and Families in the West", "Investigation on the Present Situation of Laid-off Women Workers in Chengdu" and so on.

The author believes that the intensification of the modernity crisis, the continuous increase of social risks, and the imbalance of certain functions of the society lead to the imbalance of the overall development of the society, which directly leads to structural problems in many aspects of society. This has become a major sociological study. The internal logic of perspective. Professor Zheng Hangsheng believes that sociology is a discipline that studies how the society functions in a healthy way. Sociology is to promote the harmonious development of society as a whole, so it must pay attention to and solve social problems. The sociological circles in Sichuan have made great efforts to pay attention to and solve the social development in the local and western regions. They have held academic exchange meetings and annual meetings for many times to discuss how to deal with and solve the problem of social risks. This can be confirmed by the themes of their annual meetings. For example, the theme of the Sociology Society of Sichuan Province in 2006 is "scientific development, sharing harmony", the 2007 annual meeting mainly focuses on social construction, while the 2010 annual meeting focuses on social development and harmonious society construction in Sichuan Province. The 2017 annual meeting focused on the topic of "social governance in the new era".

At this stage, the topics are diversified and the research directions are diversified. In fact, they are essentially discussing how to solve the structural problems caused by social risks, how to better promote social construction, and promote social harmony and healthy operation.

## **4. The Development and Problems of Sichuan Sociology Academic Practice**

### **4.1 Academic practice of Sociology in Sichuan**

Sichuan sociology mainly locates in the West and serves the social development of the west, so its research scope mainly focuses on the West. The author makes a simple analysis of the academic practice of Sichuan sociology from three aspects: practice space, time and practice academic tradition. Its academic practice space is mainly in Sichuan, radiating from other provinces and cities, showing the inheritance of research in time, that is, the current research field inherits the previous research fields, mainly focusing on religious sociology research and ethnic sociology research. In academic tradition, there are two sociological academic traditions, namely Marxist sociology and Western sociology. [11]

The practice space is mainly concentrated in Sichuan. The author found through literature summary that most of the research on Sichuan sociology has been concentrated in the Sichuan region so far, which shows strong regionality in the research space, and there are few academic researches outside of Sichuan or in conjunction with other regions.

Practice time shows strong inheritance. The inheritance of practice time is obvious. The religious and ethnic issues studied by the older generation of sociologists are also the focus of the current sociological research in Sichuan. Of course, there are other studies, but most of the studies still show the characteristics of religion and nationality.

There are two kinds of academic research traditions. Most of the researches in Sichuan sociology and even Chinese sociology began with Marx's sociological tradition as the starting point, and western sociology became a research tool or technology. With the deepening of research, more and more scholars realize that western sociology is not only a tool, but also like Marxist sociology, which can provide more theoretical support for research. This is especially true in Sichuan sociological research. When studying religious and ethnic issues, more and more researchers actively seek the support of Western sociology. It can be said that there are two academic traditions in Sichuan sociology research at present.

### **4.2 Problems in the development of Sociology in Sichuan Province**

Objectively speaking, the development of Sociology in Sichuan and even the whole western region

lags behind that in the eastern developed areas, especially in the traditional sense. In the comprehensive ranking of sociology discipline strength published by the Ministry of education in 2018, only Sichuan University and Southwest University of Finance and economics were on the list, with a comprehensive evaluation of C, [12] The result is not ideal, so it is very difficult for Sichuan sociology discipline to catch up with the traditional sociology strong school in a short time. The author tries to sort out the problems existing in the development of Sichuan sociology, in order to contribute a little to the development of Sichuan sociology. At present, the main problems in the development of Sichuan sociology mainly include the following aspects:

The construction of sociology is not strong enough. Compared with the eastern region, Sichuan Sociology still has a certain gap in the importance of disciplines and the investment in discipline construction. Although the restoration and development of Sichuan sociology was earlier and almost synchronized with the reconstruction and restoration of domestic sociology, due to the different degree of understanding of traditional disciplines, the development of disciplines was not the same, and the development of Sichuan sociology was lagging behind. Based on the ranking of sociology published by the Ministry of education in recent years, we can see the development trend of Sociology in recent years. The basic characteristics are that the East is stronger and stronger, while the west is developing faster, especially in Gansu, Guizhou and other places, even catching up with and surpassing Sichuan Sociology.

Research teams are scarce. First, the lack of academic team. Objectively speaking, Sichuan sociology research team is relatively scarce. No matter universities, scientific research institutions or other research institutions, there is a lack of a high-quality and high-quality sociology team. It can be said that the development of sociology in Sichuan has not yet formed a joint force. Second, the lack of master scholars. With the gradual withdrawal of the older generation of sociologists, there are few well-known scholars in Sichuan sociology, and the training of the younger generation is even more lacking.

The research space is narrow. The research area of Sociology in Sichuan is limited to the West and serves the social development of the West. However, the objective of studying and serving the west is not fully realized, but it is more about serving Sichuan. Generally speaking, its academic practice is confined to Sichuan, which may limit the future development of Sociology in Sichuan. We often think that sociology develops well in the region. For example, Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other places have a common feature in sociology, that is, studying China and serving China's development, with a macro vision and layout, not limited to the local "one acre and three points". Therefore, the future development of Sichuan sociology should consider how to jump out of Sichuan, go out of the west and serve China.

The research field is not open enough. The focus of Sichuan sociological research is in the fields of religion, ethnicity, or other aspects related to the two. It is true that Sichuan sociology has achieved fruitful results in the study of religion and ethnicity. However, this also highlights a problem, that is, the research field is not open enough, the research of other branches of sociology or other social problems is not enough, and the degree of attention is not high enough.

## **5. Research prospect**

In the past 40 years, Sichuan sociology started almost from scratch. With the unremitting efforts of the older generation of sociologists, the discipline construction of sociology basically took shape and continued to flourish in the new generation of researchers. In the past 40 years, Sichuan sociology has made great progress, especially in the research fields of religious sociology and ethnic sociology. However, there are some problems and difficulties in the development of disciplines, especially the construction of research team, research field and discipline orientation, which requires a new generation of sociologists and a new generation of sociological researchers to make continuous efforts. In the future development of Sichuan sociology, on the basis of continuous improvement of the discipline construction system, it is necessary to strengthen academic exchanges, not only with the western provinces, but also with the eastern and central regions to carry out academic activities and continue to learn advanced methods of discipline construction. At the same time, it is necessary to increase efforts to cooperate with foreign countries, grasp the latest sociological research trends, and continuously improve research horizons. Second, we must innovate in research fields. We must continue to maintain traditional advantages in research fields, and at the same time strengthen research in other fields. The third is to strengthen the training of academic team and academic talents. From the current situation in Sichuan, the complete talent training system of sociology discipline has not been completely established, and the joint efforts of sociological research team have not been formed. The construction of talents and team should be the important thinking content of Sichuan sociological circles. Only by constantly expanding

academic vision, innovating research fields and cultivating academic team, can we promote our own development and constantly narrow the gap with the leading areas of Sociology in eastern China and foreign countries.

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