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RENMIN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA

RESEARCH REPORTS ON CHINA HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DEVELOPMENT 2007

EVALUATION LIMIT AND MANAGEMENT INNOVATION

顾问 袁贵仁 纪宝成 程天权  
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近几年来,中国人民大学年度系列发展报告(即《中国社会发展研究报告》、《中国经济发展研究报告》和《中国人文社会科学发展研究报告》)的出版发行,引起了社会各界和广大读者的广泛关注,产生了较大的社会影响,成为我校一个重要的学术品牌,这让我们深感欣慰,也增加了我们继续做好这项工作的责任和信心。正是基于这样的责任和信心,加上近一年的努力,我们又编写出版了中国人民大学系列发展报告 2007。

中国人民大学系列发展报告 2007 的各个子报告均由编委会负责审定选题、整体框架、主要内容和编写体例,并由其组织有关专家召开研讨会,审核写作提纲。各报告实行主编负责制,主编由校学术委员会主任、秘书长会议确定,学校聘任;主编聘请副主编或执行副主编。各报告根据主题,分别聘请相关部门的领导和知名学者担任顾问。中国人民大学社会学理论与方法研究中心、中国人民大学中国经济改革与发展研究院和中国人民大学人文社会科学发展研究中心分别作为《中国社会发展研究报告 2007》、《中国经济发展研究报告 2007》和《中国人文社会科学发展研究报告 2007》的依托单位,在组织和写作方面发挥了主要作用。

报告的编写出版工作现已纳入学校的年度工作规划,成为一项常规性工作。



由于报告所涉及的问题大多具有重大、复杂和前沿性的特点，加上写作与出版周期较短及研究水平的局限，尽管我们尽了努力，报告中的不足或易引起争议的地方仍在所难免，欢迎专家和学者批评指正。

中国人民大学发展研究报告编委会

2007 年 3 月



# Abstract Evaluation Limit and Management Innovation

## Chapter 1 Liberal Arts Evaluation

Since 1990s, the humanities and social sciences in China have stepped into a stage of disciplinary institutionalization and scale-up development. However, the repeatedly emerging phenomena of academic dysfunction and corruption, such as violating rules in research and evaluation, emphasizing quantity instead of quality and so on, have caused widespread social worries about the humanities and social sciences and inspired academic reflection on problems like the decline of academic spirit. Evaluation of the humanities and social sciences has been an urgent and significant issue for this discipline, namely how to set up a more reasonable evaluation standard, mechanism and system in order to carry out a scientific, objective and just evaluation and to realize management innovation.



## **1. Basic Classification in Liberal Arts**

Generally speaking, various forms accordingly with different implications exist in liberal arts evaluation. As far as its purpose is concerned, liberal arts evaluation can be classified into three types: academic evaluation, administrative evaluation, social and economic benefits evaluation. And what we consider now is to make sure liberal arts evaluation's reasonability and limit.

### **1.1 Academic Evaluation**

Academic evaluation is the academia's recognition of knowledge value of research productions in order to promote academic communication and research level. Therefore, the original academic evaluation is an academic value evaluation of academic productions. Then it gradually becomes an important way to measure researchers' academic achievement, which has urged the normalization of academic researches and has taken on a kind of self-consciousness of knowledge development in the higher stage. To make universal knowledge and truth its highest target, it guides academic activities to obtain knowledge progress continuously, inspires academic innovation to maintain persistent vitality and significance, and resists the deluge of utilitarian pursue.

### **1.2 Administrative Evaluation**

Competition pressure has brought about increasing competitions for academic resources and levels between various academic institutionalized organizations (government, academic institutions etc.). And these organizations need to evaluate each aspect of disciplinary institutions so as to allocate public resources more effectively and urge knowledge's orderly development advantageous to its social economy, state interest and national benefits. In the contemporary times, government has been playing such a predominant role in the academic development that academic researches become more and more institutionalized. Thus administrative evaluation actually has been a main evaluation form and influence factor of the humanities and social sciences.

Administrative evaluation means that academic institutionalized organizations evaluate academic contribution of their stuff and institutions to pro-



mote the development of academic institutionalization. What we must take notice of is that the so-called “academic contribution” here doesn’t mainly mean academic researches’ contribution for academic development, but academic productions’ contribution for institutional development. Being a social section, an academic institutionalized organization demands some effective control and management over its performance including budget investment and expenditure, research projects, researchers’ achievements. In this sense, evaluation has turned into a kind of essential management means.

### **1.3 Social and Economic Benefits Evaluation**

Social and economic benefits evaluation mainly aims at social sciences. Since the second half of 20th century, the application orientation has become an important developing power for social sciences. Along with the gradual expansion of the alliance between social scientists and decision-makers for social reform and business management, the role of the intellectual has varied from an independent and critical spectator to an aggressive policy-designer and technical personnel. Thus the quantification of social sciences researches has prospered to provide a substantial support for their applied researches, while social and economic benefits evaluation (two targets: profitability and measurability) also has been widespread in social sciences.

## **2. Philosophical Reflection on Liberal Arts Evaluation**

Such a philosophical reflection aims to establish the evaluation’s epistemological foundation.

### **2.1 From Judgment to Evaluation**

Evaluation is a kind of value judgment, but not vice versa. Evaluation, especially scientific evaluation, is a normalization and precision of value judgment, no longer being an individual arbitrary comment or a certain expression of subjective emotions or tastes. Scientific evaluation measures the object’s value according to a certain standard and procedure.

### **2.2 Recognition and Excellence in Evaluation**

Recognition and excellence are two key factors in evaluation. On one hand, value is measured by comparing the excellence degree of different e-





valuation objects; on the other hand, the value realization of evaluation objects depends on whether their excellence is recognized. Furthermore, we should notice two kinds of recognition: instrumentalist and honorary recognition. As the basis of recognition, instrumentalist recognition requests us to care probabilities and chances to discover excellent achievement, and make them become reality more frequently than under other conditions. While honorary recognition requests us to focus on outstanding achievement and get excellence be recognized by the ages. Usually people neglect the close connection between these two kinds of recognition, but insufficient honorary recognition will cause the failure of instrumentalist recognition.

## **Chapter 2 Evaluation Limit**

Evaluation of the humanities and social sciences has caused many hostile opinions at present. In some sense it is reasonable, for a large part of evaluation systems and standards have copied those of science and engineering evaluation, which have monotonous mode, simple and mechanical method, and blind faith in quantified examination. Owing to much interference from non-academic factors, fickleness and falsification overspread in actual evaluation activities, obviously in opposition to the characteristics and internal laws of the humanities and social sciences.

### **1. Evaluator's Dysfunction**

In the current evaluation system of liberal arts, a large number of special "scholars" has come into being, who can be called quasi-scholars. As academic actors, they do not spend most of their time on researches but on interpersonal affairs in the academia, thus their identities turn into "academic brokers". In addition, the inadequately large portion of nonprofessional evaluators brings about a lamentable phenomenon of "academic economicalization".

### **2. Blind Faith in Quantification**

Since 1990s, many academic institutions have adopted the quantification



method into academic production evaluation in favor of the management and inspiration of academic researches. This phenomenon is called McDonaldization by western scholars, whose core idea is “formal rationality” embodying calculability, predictability and efficiency fanaticism. Quantification evaluation puts forward a rule that requires to measure the budget and economic benefit, the number of academic programs and academicians, the level of achievements etc. equally or through conversion pro rata. Subsequently, this greatly hurt the humanities and social sciences as well as their education, fully degraded their organizations, scholars and achievements, and directly caused the unfair internal competition. In this way, pre-eminent organizations (and researchers) are getting stronger and stronger while vulnerable organizations (and researchers) weaker and weaker. It stirred up many short-term utilitarian behaviors to shy away important but hard research projects and nonsense behaviors such as dismantling results, delivering papers repeatedly in different journals and increasing citation proof.

The quantification of liberal arts evaluation in China relates deeply with our state's increasing interference in academic affairs in the course of academic institutionalization and transformation from the Small Science Age to the Big Science Age. Though we can't deny this method is reasonable in some sense, its function can't be overestimated for it is only confined to instrumental management and of reference significance in academic activities. Besides, sober understanding of its negative effects has been obtained at home and abroad.

### **3. Over-administratization and Academic Corruption**

Administrative intervention appears everywhere in liberal arts evaluation fighting for academic power, which has resulted in many fundamental damages. Since reform and open policy, our material production has developed much faster than immature mental production. For academic resources are controlled and monopolized by administrative departments, the situation of academic researches goes even worse from administration-orientation to official-orientation.



The quantified evaluation of the humanities and social sciences in a heavy administrative color has brought about this fact that the value of academic activities is decided mostly by its relevant grade of administrative department. When academic researches parasitize politics and power, two tendencies appear: Scholars pursue their official career instead of academic career, and scholars lose their independent standpoint for catering to their superior. This not only weakens academic researches' autonomy and independence, but also erodes their basic spirit. Therefore, it is unanimously recognized in the academia that fairness and just in evaluation would not be obtained if rampant corruption and violation behaviors were not suppressed or punished.

#### **4. Basic Limit with Evaluation System**

Obviously, it is blind and childish to confine academic evaluation to some fixed regulation, for some scholars deliver only a few but excellent productions while others produce thousands of works but no masterpieces left. Similarly, it is hard to decide which ones are truly of academic value, productions delivered at home or abroad. Thus, in some scholars' view, the biggest bewilderment in the Chinese liberal arts development lies in no independent research paradigm.

Academic evaluation is substantially concerning allocation justice because academic evaluation originally aims to equally repay academic contribution with some corresponding title, honor and fund, as well as social responsibility. Thus, the restriction and orientation function of evaluation system should be well exerted. On one hand, academic evaluation system with Chinese characteristics should be constructed with universally identified procedural impartiality and validity to correct malfeasance and steer liberal arts into an honest, diligent and firm academic atmosphere. On the other hand, the defects in liberal arts evaluation system don't mean nihilism. For example, the Nobel Prize winning the world-wide respect likewise has defective selecting procedures. What we should do is to improve it by drawing lessons and absorbing experience.



## Chapter 3 Management Innovation

As liberal arts' management, evaluation principle and implementation still lag far behind the development of the reality, and sometimes even deviate from the original intention of liberal arts evaluation system, negative effect and immeasurable loss would appear. Thus it's urgent to improve management innovation in liberal arts.

### 1. Integral Orientation of Liberal Arts Evaluation

Three types of the humanities and social sciences evaluation represent three different kinds of value orientation, which are opposite to each other on one side and coexisting on the other side. Their contests and competitions finally decide the integral orientation of evaluation. At present time, evaluation in unbalance is the basic problem in China's humanities and social sciences, namely administrative evaluation replaces academic evaluation and utilitarian value orientation overrides academic value orientation.

#### 1.1 Relationship between Three Types of Evaluation

Three types of evaluation in the humanities and social sciences are both distinctive and intersecting in many ways. For example, administrative evaluation simultaneously includes the recognition of academic production's cognition value and practical benefit. However, these three types are in essence dissimilar in their value orientation. With government, academia and market respectively as their competing evaluation subjects, administrative evaluation focuses on academic contribution for research institutions, academic evaluation emphasizes academic value, and social economic benefit evaluation cares material efficiency. Thus, the competition and interaction between different value orientations would finally decide the integral tendency of evaluation.

#### 1.2 Inversion of Guidance

Ideal evaluation of the humanities and social sciences should enlighten the academic spirit and responsibility. However, as a social institution, academic researches can hardly avoid utilitarian pursuit, which indwells in ad-



ministrative evaluation as well as social and economic benefits evaluation. Therefore, three types of value orientation substantially represent the sharp opposition of non-utilitarian academic value and utilitarian material value.

The present situation in China is that the government-predominated high school system makes administrative evaluation absolutely predominate evaluation, which then is subjected to the demand of management. As evaluation activities are conducted to evaluate individual achievement or to select proper candidates who would promote a title or get a prize, academic researches can hardly avoid various instrumentalist or utilitarian invasion and the fate to be an inducement factor making the Chinese humanities and social sciences lose control.

## **2. Defects in the Current Management Mode of Liberal Arts Evaluation**

At present, the peer view and the quantified evaluation are two main evaluation ways in the humanities and social sciences. Administrative departments have improperly interfered in the peer view and overemphasized the quantified evaluation, which brings about the abnormal development of evaluation management mode.

### **2.1 Rigid but Inflexible**

Rigid quantified evaluation system propels the academia crazy for material benefits and academic resources instead of excellent productions with high quality. Gradually, academic norms are unbalanced, academic corruption overruns, and the academia's view of value gets lost. To turning round the situation, we have to eliminate the blind faith in quantification, because the plan-colored administrative evaluation management cannot fully manifest the flexible and sometimes unexpected liberal arts achievements. Rigid management mode will not only hamper originality, creativity and emanative thinking, but also result in a situation of "the Layman Evaluates the Expert" in which quantity is more overemphasized than quality.

### **2.2 Unreasonable Evaluation Management Mode**

It somewhat belongs to administrative interference to judge how liberal



arts develop in an administrative way by a certain particular evaluation subject and to draw up so-called uniform evaluation standard. In such an environment, evaluation objects which should be in variety turn out to fight for the limited academic resources, which are alienated into the tool for the pursuit of larger academic profits instead of precious spiritual treasury. Furthermore, many individuated researches with potential value are despised or ceased, the interaction between ideas becomes impossible, and the objective law that liberal arts proceed in a long-term way is ignored. In a word, the current management mode of liberal arts evaluation is disadvantageous not only to academic inspiration but also to production of fine works or masters.

### **3. Back to Reasonable Evaluation Management Mode**

Difficulty in evaluation calls for liberal arts back to reasonable and innovative evaluation management mode, that is, to be more energetic, far-sighted and creative so as to motivate the positive development of this field.

#### **3.1 People-orientated and Diverse Pursuit**

The core of humanistic spirit is people-orientated, so evaluation management of liberal arts should respect this discipline's objective law and protect researchers' academic vigor. Meanwhile, the principle of diversity and flexibility should also be abided by so as to provide more choices in objects and more space to adjust them in light with newly emerging questions. The most important reason why the quality of academic productions disagrees with their quantity just lies in the unreasonable evaluation mode. Thus, management innovation in liberal arts evaluation is urgently required.

#### **3.2 Role Conversion of the Academic Community**

Unlike the internal evaluation from the academic community, administrative evaluation mainly focuses on the external accumulation of measurable quantified achievements, which then becomes the main basis of evaluation and even foreshadows the academic community's deviation from academically legal and moral behaviors. That is to say, the evaluation management mode of the humanities and social sciences should transform itself into the academic community's small-scale, independent and autonomous management as



soon as possible so as to form a complementary structure between the academic community's internal understanding and the social circles' external policy support.

### **3.3 Forming a Reasonable Tension within Administration Management**

Administration management is a universal form to carry out the evaluation of institutionalized disciplines, which has experienced a long-term developing process. When we reflect on the position of administrative management in the management system of liberal arts evaluation, a dilemma appears. That is how to balance the demands of vigor and regularity, vividness and rigidity, how to form a reasonable tension within administrative management between effective management and proper withdrawnness.

### **3.4 Dynamic Management of Liberal Arts Evaluation**

If an evaluation management mode can continuously attain self-innovation along with the actual development of liberal arts, it means a dynamic evaluation management system is coming into being, which provides the platform for the innovation of evaluation management. Then two aims can be obtained. The first is to obtain the dynamic management of liberal arts evaluation. The second is to achieve the complementary management mode which includes administrative management with policy advantage and academic autonomous management with professional advantage.

## 本报告各部分主笔和参与编纂者

(以姓氏笔画为序)

以下主笔和参与编纂者，除特别说明外，工作单位均为中国人民大学。

### 主笔：

- |     |                 |
|-----|-----------------|
| 刘大椿 | 哲学院教授           |
| 刘凤良 | 经济学院副院长、教授      |
| 伊志宏 | 商学院院长、教授        |
| 李秋零 | 哲学院教授           |
| 杨庆中 | 哲学院教授           |
| 杨恒达 | 文学院教授           |
| 陈建  | 深圳研究院院长、经济学院教授  |
| 陈甬军 | 商学院副院长、教授       |
| 林坚  | 中国人民大学学报副编审     |
| 张雷声 | 马克思主义学院党委书记、教授  |
| 郑风田 | 农业与农村发展学院副院长、教授 |
| 徐孟洲 | 法学院教授           |
| 徐浩  | 历史学院教授          |
| 袁济喜 | 国学院副院长、教授       |
| 韩大元 | 法学院副院长、教授       |
| 黄兴涛 | 历史学院副院长、教授      |
| 黄爱平 | 历史学院教授          |

### 参与编纂者：

- |     |          |
|-----|----------|
| 王博  | 博士生      |
| 刘宁悦 | 博士生      |
| 刘劲杨 | 哲学院讲师、博士 |



孙广华	博士生
孙 谨	博士生
艾志强	博士生
江登琴	博士生
邬晓燕	北京交通大学教师、博士
杜 薇	博士生
李永乐	博士生
李玉峰	博士
金善明	博士生
胡德宝	博士生
郝璐霞	北京交通大学教师、博士
贾剑非	博士生
梁 菲	博士生
秦秋咀	博士生
高东明	博士生
蒙本曼	博士生