

Chapter Six

Ethical dilemmas and political considerations

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William F. Whyte (1960) had been active in an Italian community for over a year when he decided his field research could benefit from an insider's look at the political scene of the district. The campaign of a local political figure for a congressional seat provided the opportunity for direct involvement, and he soon found himself nailing up posters and serving as secretary at meetings of the machine's workers. The view from the inside produced much useful information, but these gains were matched by increasing personal obligations to the aims of the organization.

In one instance these obligations proved nearly calamitous for the study. By late afternoon on Election Day rumors were circulating that the Italian candidate's chief rival was not discouraging citizens in his stronghold from voting twice or more. Whyte's machine was not about to have the election stolen through such devious measures, and by the time the polls closed, Whyte himself had managed to cast no less than three more votes for his Italian favorite. On his final vote Whyte was instructed to exercise the democratic rights of a local fisherman reputedly at sea. The fisherman to be impersonated stood five feet nine and was in his midforties; Whyte was well over six feet and in his early twenties. Whyte almost made it through the voting process as the middle-aged fisherman, but at the last moment a suspicious poll worker challenged him on the rather apparent disparity. On further questioning the now flustered researcher managed to misspell his assumed surname, and at one point he signed the wrong first name. The phony ballot was eventually accepted by the official, but not before Whyte had anxious fantasies about being arrested as a repeating voter. Even if he escaped arrest, his entire study might have been jeopardized if news of his multiple votes had leaked even within the community, since the district as a whole frowned on this kind of political action.

Practical consequences aside, Whyte's illegal behavior in the name of research resulted in much personal anguish. Did the goals of his study justify this violation of the democratic process? How could this behavior be reconciled with his own system of values? Would studies of other communities be made more difficult if the voting incident had been widely publicized in the media?

Somewhat more complex and disturbing political problems may be seen in "Project Camelot" (see Horowitz, 1967). The planned scale of this research undertaking was impressive—over six million dollars was to be invested in a three- to four-year study encompassing a large number of

nations. To many observers the sponsorship was less inspiring—the army and Department of Defense were to provide financial backing and spiritual guidance. Historical, survey, and other field materials were to be assembled on a variety of societies around the world, with an initial focus on Latin America. Of course many aims were present in such an ambitious undertaking, but a central focus of the project, in the words of sociologist Gideon Sjoberg (1967b), was concern with “the problem of counterinsurgency and was predicated on the assumption that with increased knowledge of this problem the Army could more effectively cope with internal revolutions in other nations.”

Social scientists from many universities became involved in what appeared to be an extremely attractive opportunity, with massive funds never before available, to pursue their own research interests in such areas as insurgency, development, and social change. Many scholars felt their basic research aims would not be incompatible with the more policy-oriented questions that interested the military. But the compatibility of these purposes never met the acid test; before the field research phase began, the project was scuttled. A preliminary feeler on the possibility of conducting the research in Chile sparked a political uproar in that country, and the domestic repercussions soon forced a cancellation of the entire project by the secretary of defense. The political and ethical implications of social research involvement with Project Camelot have been an intensely debated issue in American social science. What was to be the real payoff of the research—a substantial advancement in the state of the social sciences, or an increase in the effectiveness of the American military in its mission abroad? Were the researchers bound by the questions posed by the sponsor, or were they free to pursue any intellectually stimulating direction? Would the results benefit the peoples and societies from which the data were to be drawn, or was Camelot simply exploiting these societies for the benefit of American social science and government? Would the social scientists involved bring what many feel is a neglected civilian and compassionate perspective to the military, or was the Defense Department molding the social science community to serve its own ends?

Nearly every study of the social world in some way involves ethical and political considerations, but in most instances these have gone unnoticed since, unlike the preceding examples, completion of the research has not been directly threatened. Recent signs indicate the situation is changing. The tremendous expansion of American social science in both personnel and resources since the Second World War, its increasing involvement in policy formulation and applied research, the growing number of studies on sensitive domestic issues and societies abroad, the increasing sense of crisis, the politicization of social scientists, and the concerns of the younger generation of social researchers have all forced increasing numbers of studies

openly to confront these issues. A few dramatic cases, such as Camelot, have simply helped expose the complexity of the problems the researcher may face.

Research that formerly would have received only the most cursory inspection for ethical and political implications now frequently undergoes careful scrutiny by the investigator prior to fieldwork. Also indicative of how such concerns have grown during the past decade are a number of essays and exchanges on the political nature of social research, attempts by several professional social science associations to formulate research codes concerning these problems, and increased attention in methods courses and textbooks to this aspect of research.

There is decreasing pressure on individual researchers to be concerned with ethical and political implications of their investigations as the level of consideration moves from concern with completing one's own study, to protecting the profession's research opportunities, to safeguarding the interests of outsiders. Clearly the immediate impact of complications in one's own research is of prime concern, since the investigator's most pressing and immediate goal is completion of the project. Presumably the obligation to protect the profession's interests is normally taken into consideration as researchers approach their own studies. However, codes of conduct are usually not well defined within social science communities, sanctions for violations are weak, the ethos of pure academic freedom and its laissez-faire corollaries work against any strong social control over the individual investigator, and in any case the implications of a particular piece of research for the profession may be difficult to foresee.

Protection of the rights and welfare of people directly or indirectly affected by the research is especially problematic. Empirical assessment of the real impact of either the research process or results on people outside the profession is usually most difficult. More centrally, the structure of research and of science is such that there are few intrinsic mechanisms to ensure protection of outsiders. Just as societies have at times embodied extensive internal freedoms but simultaneously acted callously vis-à-vis people outside their moral community, a scientific profession *may* show little regard for the people it impinges upon. Furthermore, such people are normally not organized to protect their own interests and in many instances are simply unaware they are affected by the action or product of social research.

The present chapter highlights some of the classic ethical and political issues that are current in social research. Five focal areas bearing on these problems will be examined:

1. The direct relationship of the researcher with the people participating in the study as respondents, interviewees, or subjects.

2. The responsibilities of the investigator for the application or misapplication of his or her research results by other individuals or institutions.
3. The relationship of the researcher to the sponsoring agency or institution.
4. The relationship of the researcher to other investigators.
5. The legal situation of the researcher in terms of past precedent and potential future developments.

However, as will become apparent, it is unfortunately easier to illustrate pitfalls after the fact than to offer foolproof general solutions or preventive measures.

1. DIRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDY'S PARTICIPANTS

Social science research frequently involves direct contact with people—in laboratory experiments, through interviews, by direct observation, or through involvement with people in real-life settings. But to gather information using such procedures requires at least the tacit cooperation of people. There are many difficulties in ensuring that this consent be extracted by minimally manipulative means. Furthermore, can we guarantee that no psychic grief will be inflicted in the process of gathering information, that the study is not accumulating information counter to the participants' better interests, and that the results will not lead to harmful consequences for those who freely give help?

A. Gaining Cooperation

Most people's lives are visible to only a very limited community of associates. There are many commonly used means of maintaining privacy and restricting the spread of knowledge about one's life, motives, and inner feelings. People harbor much secret or sensitive information about themselves and the complex social webbing in which they are embedded. A stranger who wanders in one day describing himself as a "social scientist" engaged in a study of "personal wealth and income" is bidding for such normally private information. The ensuing request for an interview may be charitably characterized as an opportunity for the approached people to express themselves on an issue of burning public importance. Less generously, the request for cooperation may be viewed as a direct invasion of privacy.

The subjects may gain small rewards, such as the satisfaction of having a patient listener for the expression of outlandish views, or a vague notion that the interview or experiment may be advancing "science." There may also be a desire not to embarrass an interviewer by refusing cooperation. For

example, the expression of a person's view in a national opinion poll, even though contained behind the anonymity of aggregated percentages, may help to influence the country in a way he or she desires; a public recording of bitter opposition to, or support of, an administrator's policies may push the drift of events in a preferred direction, albeit in a rather indirect way.

In some circumstances the advantages of participation may be more substantial. For instance, a recent social experiment on the effects of a negative income tax program in several American communities actually provided many of the participants with several thousand dollars annually in return for little more than occasional family reports. Usually, however, the social researcher receives much, and normally has only marginal and fairly intangible rewards to offer the study's participants in return for their cooperation. For the research respondent the cost may be substantial—a loss of time and an opening of one's life to public scrutiny.

A second major dilemma is gaining the cooperation of people concerns the degree to which they can be adequately informed of the study's nature and likely impact. In the ideal situation the prospective respondent is fully aware of the many implications of the research scheme prior to offering consent. The experiential attractions and likely discomforts of the immediate data-collection process, as well as the eventual consequences of the research, are fully perceived. The persons being studied are able to weigh carefully the expected positive and negative implications that publication and other uses of the information will probably bring for both them and the broader realms of the social world they value. However, a variety of factors impede the achievement of a fully informed consent. In some experimental studies it is impossible to explain fully the purpose and design of the research prior to the experiment without ruining the study. A classic study by Asch (1951, 1956) of the effects of peer group pressures involves seven to nine people sitting together for the ostensible purpose of comparing the length of a series of objects they are shown. All participants but one are confederates of the experimenter, who instructs them to identify as the longest object one that is clearly not the longest. It frequently turns out that the sole uninformed person offers a judgment conforming with the misassessment of his colleagues rather than following his own perception. The study documents the enormous impact group pressure may have on individual opinion. Clearly, that lone person could not be fully informed of the collaborationist role of the others without undermining the conditions necessary for the experiment. On the other hand, naive people have been deceived, and their tarnished dignity may be only partially restored by a full exposure of the experimental procedures following the study.

Perhaps the most problematic procedure for gaining the cooperation of people involves the creation and maintenance of partly or wholly false identities. Many social psychological experiments intrinsically depend on

temporary deception, although attempts at mending are normally made by debriefing after the experiment. In some research, particularly field studies, the true identity of the researcher may be obscured or completely disguised to facilitate completion of the study. Participant observers may never reveal their observer roles to the involved community even after termination of the investigation. The use of a disguised role is most frequently encountered in studying communities, institutions, and movements sensitive about outside scrutiny. Concealment of one's research aims and perhaps even the research role may be seen as necessary to do the study, but gains in knowledge must be carefully balanced against costs associated with circumventing an informed consent, the subversion of privacy rights, violation of the trust many people have lent a disguised researcher, and the problems created by researchers if they are incapable of fully and authentically assuming a participant's role. For instance, in entering certain countries a social scientist may officially indicate the purpose of the trip is to study a politically unthreatening topic. This is done for visa purposes, but the real end may be to investigate a politically very sensitive issue. One investigator presented himself to South African government officials as a social scientist concerned with "the spectacular economic development" of their country (see van den Berghe, 1967). In fact, the actual purpose was to examine race relations in South Africa. The researcher felt no qualms in deceiving an institution whose policies and existence he held to be immoral. For many social scientists the aim of bringing to the outside world carefully gathered information on the situation of apartheid would justify any subterfuge.

Similar but more extreme tactics have occasionally been employed in studying social movements, especially if they are hostile to anyone not sharing their ideology. An outsider in the midst of a movement with strong beliefs may find that only through feigning conversion can access be gained. Thus, three investigators interested in what happens to an apocalyptic cult when its millenarian prophecies fail, infiltrated the movement in the guise of sympathetic participants (Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter, 1964). They felt the research could be conducted only under such circumstances. Several members of the research team went so far as to manufacture personal experiences that confirmed the cult's world view. This facilitated their rapid acceptance into its inner circles. Besides the purely methodological problem of whether the subject under study was not significantly affected by the presence of disguised observers, there are also ethical dilemmas. Did the contribution of this piece of research to the advancement of knowledge justify the dishonesty of the researchers in feigning belief?

There are also a variety of research techniques that involve milder forms of deception, such as the following: (1) A false sense of rapport is occasionally developed with people under study to encourage greater openness on their part. (2) In some cases the fact that social research is being conducted may be

disclosed, but the authentic aims of the investigation may be hidden. For instance, in his research into homosexual activity Humphreys (1970) first obtained the names and addresses of men he knew to have engaged in a simple homosexual act (he used a clever, but what some observers would see as an ethically questionable, procedure, noting license numbers of cars outside a gathering place for homosexual activity). He then posed as an interviewer engaged in a "social health" survey, visited the homes of those men, and under this unthreatening guise requested much information about their family lives. Such information was critical for helping to understand the nature of this type of sexual activity, and the researcher recognized that it could not be collected if he were completely frank about the purpose of the study. (3) Other researchers have at times avoided revealing controversial funding sources for fear of antagonizing prospective participants in their study. Some investigators have failed to inform participants of the informal connections through which information may be passed after the study. Thus, American scholars on returning from studies abroad are occasionally approached by government intelligence agencies concerning prominent personalities and political atmospheres of the foreign society. (4) Sometimes these problems occur: Blacks may be reluctant to talk with white interviewers; student activists often refuse to yield information to "straight" adults; peasants are frequently suspicious of all but fellow peasants; college administrators and corporate executives tend to avoid cooperation with researchers who may appear to be radical in either political attitude or life-style. The pragmatic solution has been to hire blacks to interview blacks, young people for students, peasants for peasants, and conservative adults for executives and administrators, a procedure characterized by someone as the "Tonto technique." These strategies of research are typical of a broad range of such practices that have been employed in social science research.

B. Dangers in the Research Process

Having obtained the cooperation of people to conduct the study, the concerned investigator is then confronted with the serious problem of protecting the welfare of the participants during the data-collection phase of the research. Investigations involving potential physical injury are infrequent in social research, but psychological harm is not so rare. In interviews some questions may be acutely embarrassing for the respondent. Probes in sensitive areas like annual income, academic performance, and sexual behavior are a bit threatening to most people.

Some questions are likely to be disconcerting for certain types of people: downwardly mobile people may be uncomfortable providing information on their own or their parents' occupations; poorly informed persons may be threatened when unable to answer questions designed to tap public

awareness; a black person may be uncomfortable when asked by a white interviewer to express views on black power; illiterate individuals may be acutely embarrassed when handed a card from which they are instructed to select their answers. Some may experience discomfort as they struggle to control the information they yield to the interviewer, while others may experience anxiety because they fear their performance is inadequate. For some people the whole experience may be alienating, as when an interviewer backed by the symbolic power of a university and federal grant urges cooperation in a situation where the participant has little control of the process or final product.

The interview may generate relatively little stress when compared to experimental situations, which may induce considerable psychic pain; at times, this is even intentional. A classic experiment on obedience by Milgram (1963, 1965, 1974, 1977: 92-149), and a stormy controversy around it, illustrate the disagreements among social scientists on when, if ever, severe distress is justifiable in an experiment. The experiment involved two participants and an apparatus said to be used in a study of learning reinforcement. One of the two participants—actually a confederate of the researcher, although this is unknown to the other participant—is wired for electric shocks. The naive subject is placed before an impressive voltage switchboard and is instructed to read material to his companion and to administer small shocks if the wired companion does not learn correctly. The accomplice assimilates the material rather poorly, but the experimenter (appearing in a white laboratory coat) instructs the naive participant to continue the voltage increases with every successive failure.

The dial is soon in the danger range, screams are heard from the wired subject, who complains of a weak heart, but the experimenter relentlessly demands more and more voltage. Few of the participants refused to inflict the pain on their presumed colleague, but in the name of science and authority continued right on, in some cases even after the wired person had apparently slumped into unconsciousness. The remarkable prevalence of the latter outcome and the implications for understanding obedience to authority makes the research extremely important, yet it is also clear that many of the naive participants in this experiment suffered great anguish in struggling to resolve the double bind of being pressured to inflict (apparent) pain on another person for scientific purposes by a legitimate authority figure. Some have argued that the noteworthiness of the results is still not worth the trauma and postexperimental guilt many of the participants suffered.

C. Problems of Publication

The impact of a study may be felt by the participants long after contact with the investigators has ceased. The investigators retreat to their offices and computers, but the data—suitably sifted, condensed, and analyzed—

may find their way into print. The names of individuals, organizations, and communities that participated in the study are often obscured when the research is made public, but there may be difficulties in guaranteeing anonymity.

Preventing the deciphering of identities is most problematic in studies of relatively large but coherent social entities such as communities, organizations, and social movements. It is also in this type of study that the loss of anonymity may be most damaging to those involved. In a classic study of a small city in Indiana during the Depression Robert and Helen Lynd (1937) were concerned with predominant patterns of political and economic influence in the community. From their evidence they concluded that prominent businessmen dominated the local scene and that one family in particular held pervasive influence. The city and family were pseudonymously designated "Middletown" and the "X Family." From the description of the X's influence in the community the reader learned that the family controlled a local industry that manufactures glass fruit jars, that one of the family members was board chairman of a Middletown bank, that the community college was called X State Teachers College, that one of the largest department stores in town was the X Store, that a family member was head of the school board, and so on. It is clear that any Middletown resident would immediately recognize the Lynd's X Family.

Similarly, William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society* provides considerable detail about the individual lives and organization of an ethnic gang he traveled with for several years. Members of the gang happening on a copy of Whyte's work would have little difficulty in identifying "Doc" (the somewhat charismatic leader of the group), themselves, and other members despite the use of pseudonyms for all. There is also the story of a sociologist who ventured back to the town on which he had published a community analysis replete with pseudonyms for local figures. The community's library housed a dog-eared copy, and a good samaritan had preempted the natural guessing game of who's who by scribbling in the real names corresponding to the pseudonyms throughout.

In a study of an upstate New York village called "Springdale" (Vidich & Bensman, 1960) pseudonyms were employed throughout, but the detail made true identities of individuals and organizations transparent to any reader in the community. The work sold briskly locally, many Springdale inhabitants were acquainted with its contents, and reactions ranged from resentful to bitterly hostile (see Vidich & Bensman, 1964). The portrait of the village and some of its prominent residents was not entirely flattering, and much private information was opened to public scrutiny. Later a Fourth of July parade included a float displaying a copy of the book's jacket; this was followed by local residents wearing masks and seated in cars bearing their pseudonyms from the study. This flotilla was capped by an effigy of "The Author" alongside a manure-spreader.

Similarly, in Whyte's ethnic neighborhood the reaction was mixed but mainly one of chagrin. Doc, the central figure in the street-corner gang, felt both "pride and embarrassment" over the study and discouraged his neighborhood companions from seeking out a copy at the local library when the topic came up.

Internal recognition of personalities in such studies is not uncommon, but what about the outside world? Occasionally, but more rarely, word travels beyond the confines of the community studied. This is most likely to be the case with information about relatively less sensitive aspects of a study, and such information is most likely to diffuse into groups that have a special relationship to the community examined. For instance, social scientists who follow community studies are often curious about the true identities of the setting, prominent institutions, and significant individuals. Because of the high level of interest, word is often privately passed among professional colleagues, and nearly everybody in the field is aware of at least the locality of the major studies. Such information constitutes part of the discipline's "gossip." Published works discussing previous community studies frequently do not even hesitate to specify the name of the community (see for example Polsby, 1963). For particularly significant studies, in which public interest is high, such information may even pass into the public realm. When *The New York Times* ran an article on the Lynds' Middletown community 30 years later, the writer was specific in identifying both Muncie and the Ball family (a member even had his picture illustrating the article).

Several precautionary measures can increase chances for anonymity. If large numbers of people or organizations are involved in the study, individual characteristics can usually be buried in aggregate figures, and much of the analysis can be done in a statistical manner. However, even this approach is not foolproof. Some categories of individuals may have so few members that identities are apparent. Several alternatives are still available. The most obvious is to delete potentially embarrassing or threatening information, especially if it is marginally related to the central theme of the study. The researcher may even elect initially to avoid certain areas that are of high local sensitivity. Another approach is to scramble information about individuals or organizations sufficiently to bewilder even the best of sleuths. Outright falsification of relatively trivial aspects of the situation helps in this. When such distortions do not substantially alter the analytic argument, and when anonymity is considered crucial, this is one solution. The drawback here is the cost in authenticity and accuracy, things not to be lightly sacrificed. It may also be critical to assure potential participants of efforts to protect their anonymity, since they may be apt to withhold information or to refuse cooperation altogether if such cannot be guaranteed beforehand. Misunderstandings between researcher and respondents on this issue can lead to hostile reactions after publication, even a sense of betrayal. Promises

of confidentiality also usually carry the implied condition that sources and certain information will not be informally "leaked" within the profession, within the community under study, or to outsiders. If this cannot be guaranteed, it should be made quite clear to all those whose cooperation is solicited.

One other measure occasionally used is to submit the manuscript to the participants for a final review, hoping they will be able to catch potentially embarrassing or erroneous information. The promise of such a screening may even encourage cooperation of some who are hesitant about a totally open request for information. The degree of veto power over the final version granted to the participants can be a serious problem and a threat to the academic freedom of the researcher. This depends on whether the reviewers merely call attention to factual errors or other interpretations or push for a completely sanitized image of themselves and the withholding of vital information.

II. RESPONSIBILITY FOR APPLICATION OR MISAPPLICATION OF RESEARCH

This is an old debate. The issues were brought out sharply in the atomic science community just after the Second World War, when anguish was widespread over application of years of scientific research to the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The essence of the controversy is the investigators' responsibility for the use of their work. At one extreme is the position that researchers should take no direct responsibility for knowledge they generate, other than attempting to influence the political process as private citizens. The progress of science (and implicitly the welfare of mankind) is seen to require researchers to publish freely whatever their best scientific judgment dictates will advance the field, irrespective of potential consequences. The consequences, if worrisome, are to be fought wearing a different hat after the day's research is over. Counterposed to this general position is the view that researchers are responsible for whatever becomes of their scientific contributions. If each investigator accepted personal responsibility, there could be no catastrophic misapplication of the information, or to paraphrase a recent slogan, "What if they gave a large military research grant and nobody accepted it?"

The first position asserts that scientific criteria alone must be paramount in conducting scientific research. The latter argument is based on the assumption that other commitments of the individual researcher must take precedence in scientific inquiry whenever there is conflict. Ultimately, most social researchers probably stand somewhere in between these extremes, arguing that the first position is dangerous in the absolute and that the

second position may cripple research, for how many people can be in complete accord with the aims of all agencies that may ever make use of scientific information? An intermediate contention voiced by some is that the act of publication itself helps to reduce imbalance in the applications. The world is assumed to be invested with conflicting forces, and by making information publicly available, misuse by only one side is ruled out and the overall harmful net effects will be limited. However, divulging results secretly to one competing force or the other violates the principle of openness. The basic fallacy of this intermediate course is the presumption that the various parties have equal access to the published information, that the results are of equal utility, and that all groups have equivalent resources for implementing the policy recommendations. Clearly these conditions rarely, if ever, hold absolutely, and in many instances the asymmetries are vast and obvious. For instance, a region-by-region analysis of political attitudes of Vietnamese peasants conducted in the best tradition of scientific research and openly published in an American public opinion journal had a much greater likelihood of finding its way into Saigon military policy than into decisions of the peasants' village councils.

An article by Arthur Jensen (1969) reviewing the literature on the environmental and genetic components of intelligence and an acrimonious controversy that has enveloped it are illustrative of many points. At issue basically is the author's conclusion that a sizable fraction of the IQ difference between black and white populations in America may be hereditarily determined. He claims that the differential may be not simply a result of the vastly inferior social conditions that American blacks have faced for three centuries; if environmental disparities are controlled to the extent that this is possible, certain intelligence differentials *between blacks and whites* persist. The studies Jensen has drawn upon, his interpretation of the data, and the inferences and conclusions he draws from the data and analysis are the subject of an intense technical debate; this is not the place to consider this issue, but we can examine some of the ethical implications.

First of all, what have been the consequences of publication? The case is instructive because part of the impact has been tangible and immediate. The publicity the article received is nearly without precedent for a short review of social science literature. Many of the major national magazines have run lengthy columns on it. Many major newspapers have included news items on the findings and controversy, including several extended feature stories. The article's verdict has provided grist for many a columnist's mill, and many Washington bureaucrats are cognizant of the article's existence and basic arguments.

Although solid indicators are not available, it appears that conservative and racist ideologies have received a timely "scientific" transfusion. The publication has been introduced in at least several court contests in the

South to support a segregationist position. In one case the defense contended that standardized tests should be the criterion for admitting black students to white schools; failure would send the child to an all-black special school where "teachers who understand them could work with them." Jensen's conclusions were extensively cited to substantiate this effort to avoid integration (see Brazziel, 1969). There are and will undoubtedly be numerous misuses of the data, and there can be little doubt that integration and positive racial change suffered because of the publication. What responsibility does the author, and perhaps the editorial board of the journal, bear for such consequences, even if they were unintended (or at least some were)?

On unintended consequences William Brazziel comments that both the editorial board and author should have been aware that the "hard line segregationist is . . . [outstanding] in his ability to bury qualifying phrases and demurrers and in his ability to distort and slant facts. . ." This raises a general problem social researchers are increasingly facing. On controversial issues within social science no single publication constitutes the final word on the subject; typically, a spate of related articles make their appearance. The Jensen publication is typical in this respect; it is simply one of a long line of review articles (although one of the most comprehensive) on the effects of hereditary versus environment on intelligence. At least a dozen discussions on this issue appeared in print within a year of Jensen's article. The difficulty is that social science writings are occasionally picked up directly by interested people outside the social science community. Social science findings are typically much less esoteric to the layperson than the output of the physical sciences; nevertheless in some realms an adequate understanding of a professional article requires background and some acquaintance with the field. A researcher's conclusions, stated in simple English and intuitively clear, may be taken at face value as the gospel truth, especially if the journal and writer are cloaked in scientific respectability. Often this is not unreasonable, but at times it is dangerous, and the use of the Jensen article seems to be a case in point. *Is the writer then not at least partly responsible for misinterpretation by a lay audience?*

Many social researchers feel they are accountable to some degree for applications of their findings. Several paths are available for lessening potential problems. The most personally painful alternative is simply not to publish information that will in all likelihood be misused. It has been argued that Jensen and the journal editors should have recognized the supercharged atmosphere on radical issues and therefore ought to have delayed or suspended publication altogether. Another possibility, perhaps the most effective in the long run, is to avoid research that will in all likelihood lead to adverse applications from the standpoint of the researcher's values. For instance, such an injunction is clearly appropriate for chemical or biological

warfare research, but there are also social science topics of comparable nature. "Counterinsurgency" research is certainly one such example. These have been social science investigations useful to the softer side of American military policy abroad, as described in a report of the House Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements (1965) concerning the illfated Camelot Project discussed earlier:

"Wars of national liberation" with which the free world is confronted, are unlike conventional wars and new instruments are needed to fight them. . . . The problem here involves the behavioral patterns of the insurgents, as well as of the people of the nation where the war is being fought. To do their job in assisting the nations defending themselves against Communist subversion, U.S. military personnel—and the people who are being aided—must understand the motivations of the enemy, its weak points, and its strengths. Behavioral sciences research helps to provide this basic information. It constitutes one of the vital tools in the arsenal of free societies.

Those who are opposed to such applications and feel responsible for the utilization of at least their own investigations can only opt to avoid realms where undesired application is fairly predictable. Though learning about such topics may be *intellectually interesting* and may advance an abstract body of cumulative knowledge, at the present there is no dearth of stimulating research directions that do not lend themselves to such uses.

Investigators might even invert the concern and seek out research realms that are likely to yield results consistent with their own values. Yet this does not necessarily eliminate the conflicts noted before. One can never be sure how the data will come out or what diverse groups will see their implications to be.

Social scientists are trained to look cynically beyond people's rationalizations and ideologies. In taking the point of view of the outside observer they may consider aspects of reality that individuals are unaware of and would deny. Here lies the radical potential of social research. However, social science may also have a conservatizing effect on its practitioners (beyond the rewards that can seduce and co-opt the appropriately pedigreed and licensed). It may make them aware of the complexity of the social world of the many levels at which cause may be sought, and of the interdependence and tendency of many social phenomena to persist in spite of well-intentioned efforts to eliminate them. (A radicalizing influence may be here as well as one comes to reject limited changes in focused institutions in favor of transforming the entire social order.) It may also be easier to document some of the brutal facts of poverty, inferior education, and inadequate housing than to assess clear individual responsibility for them. Sometimes it may even turn out that victims cooperate in their victimization and that there are *secondary gains* to those mistreated.

From the perspective inspired by Max Weber and George Herbert Mead social science understanding may require that one "take the role of the other" and imaginatively try to place oneself into the position of another person or group. All social groups have the right to be taken seriously by the researcher (though certainly not to be liked or admired) no matter how abhorrent they may seem to the researcher. Empathizing with the group seen as responsible for a problem, however, may cause researchers to develop an appreciation of the group's own problems and fears and even on occasion to accept their point of view. This can greatly dampen the moral fervor with which the researcher may have started. There are more than a few cases of social researchers becoming somewhat sympathetic to the point of view of the police, the far right, hardhats, and ghetto merchants as a result of studying them, just as there are cases of researchers who come to play more than the observer's role they started with in criminal, drug, homosexual and protest milieu.

Even with respect to documentation, careful research sometimes may reveal the situation to be far less grave than one initially imagined. Or research may reveal how little we actually know about many problems, our smattering of social science facts and ideological hunches and sympathies to the contrary.

Even by carefully choosing research topics that are consistent with one's values, one cannot avoid the fact that knowledge can often be a double-edged sword, whose consequences may be varied and unpredictable. This can be seen in recent research on student protest and the behavior of police during periods of civil disorder. For instance, a study of the characteristics of radical students may help shatter the image held by some that activists are nihilistic and frustrated failures by revealing (as such research has) that activists on the whole perform better academically than nonactivists and that they are very aware and deeply concerned with major social issues. The research may also help publicize the issues that trouble students. Yet a careful betrayal of the social and demographic characteristics of young radicals may be (and has been) used by unsympathetic college admissions officers or by personnel managers to keep down the proportion of involvement-prone people in their organizations. Similarly, studies of police can have contradictory implications. The long and tragic road stretching from Jackson State and Kent State back to the Chicago Democratic Convention, Orangeburg, Detroit, and Birmingham clearly revealed that police response to protest at times helps to create rather than control disorder. A study of how police behavior in crowd situations could be improved may help authorities "manage" and "cool" protest situations, making it easier to avoid badly needed social change. On the other hand, such a study may help mobilize public sentiment for changes in police practices and prevent protestors or bystanders from injury or death.

Where the researcher feels that a good case has been made for change, others may feel differently. The message people take from communication depends on what they bring to it, beyond the attributes of the message. A wide array of psychological defenses and institutional rationales, not to mention different value preferences, will often prevent others from coming to terms with the facts and policy suggestions that may seem so apparent and poignant to the social analyst in a milieu concerned with instituting social change. One person's indignation may be another's profit, pleasure, or boredom.

There may also be problems of implementation. George Bernard Shaw reportedly once remarked, "I have solved practically all the pressing questions of our time, but. . . they go on being propounded as insoluble just as if I had never existed." Social researchers may experience similar feelings, though they are more likely to have identified a problem than to have solved it. Many facts well capable of creating indignation have been carefully documented for generations without change occurring. Such conditions as the concentration of economic power, racism, and the implications of social class for life chances may turn out to be simpler to document and describe than to explain. And it may be easier to criticize existing institutions and policy failings than to suggest new ones. The greater difficulty of explanation stems from the crudity of the measures and the complexity of behavior, affected as it is by culture, history, and human consciousness.

Another means of reducing the potential misuse of research is to circulate sensitive materials only within the social science community, thereby avoiding premature entry of scientific findings into the public realm, or preventing it completely. A structure of this sort presently exists in the federal government's system of classified research (which includes some social science materials); also, investigators have at times privately supplied action groups, organizations, and associations with research documents of specific relevance. Beyond this sort of applied research the implementation of a control system appears impractical. If it is apparent that the research conclusions will not lead to clearly dangerous or threatening applications, and open publication is undertaken, then a fourth precautionary measure is to utilize one or more journals that will reach as broad a public as possible and to insert in the publication(s) strong and explicit warnings, qualifications, conditions, and stipulations where appropriate. This should help, but it is not a guarantee against the lifting of sentences and ideas out of context or against selective misperception. A final suggestion is to campaign actively for or against certain applications following publication. In some circumstances social scientists' arguments will have considerable moral weight and authority in discussing the implications and merits of their findings. This role is obligatory if a study's sponsor misuses the findings, according to a code of ethics accepted by the council of the professional association of sociologists:

"The sociologist is obliged to clarify publicly any distortion by a sponsor or client of the findings of a research project in which he has participated" (American Sociological Association, 1968). Often, however, once the material has entered into the public realm, the author's effective control ceases.

III. RELATIONSHIP WITH SPONSORING AGENCY OR INSTITUTION

Social scientists are increasingly involved in expensive, large-scale research undertakings requiring outside funding. This gives rise to at least two sorts of problems. The supporting agency may attempt to influence the type of research pursued and the conclusions the investigator reaches. Conversely, the researcher may utilize the money granted for purposes other than those initially promised.

A. Influence on the Research Process

That the nature and directions of research are affected by the needs and interests of the granting agencies is an accepted fact in the social science community. Money for research is scarce. Topics of special interest to funding sources receive funding, sometimes lavishly, while areas seen as less germane receive little or nothing. Investigators and research institutions considered "cooperative" and "safe" may find it much easier to obtain grants and endowments than people working in areas that are politically controversial. This has many indirect consequences for the profession. Researchers looking for new areas to explore tend to give special consideration to topics that will receive funding. Then books and articles get published in the area, investigators develop an interest (both intellectual and professional) with the line of research, institutes are established, graduate students are encouraged to specialize, major findings are incorporated into undergraduate texts, and a whole new tradition is crystallized.

From the standpoint of the individual researcher several consequences must be considered. To what degree is this outside influence sidetracking the pursuit of more scientifically interesting problems? Does the supporting agency either directly or indirectly attempt to control aspects of the research process itself? To what degree does sponsored research contribute to the general aims of the outside agency?

The first two points are illustrated by a national survey of black opinion. As part of a broader inquiry into anti-Semitism in America, a theme of the study was the attitude of blacks toward Jews. A considerable amount of money was forthcoming from a large, liberally oriented foundation for this study, but money for a parallel examination of the role of ghetto merchants,

which the researcher was highly interested in undertaking, was not forthcoming. Once the project was launched, the sponsor was very reasonable and constraints were minimal, though not entirely lacking. For instance, the sponsor urged that the term *black* not be used in either the title or text of the book that was published describing the research. This was because in the midsixties, *black* was seen as a more controversial word than the then current term *Negro*. At one point the researcher was invited to participate in a well-publicized symposium on black-Jewish relations, but the foundation argued against participation because the study's data had not yet been made public. In line with its own organizational needs the sponsor also established a deadline for the appearance of a published report. This cut short some long-range explorations and a more leisurely time schedule preferred by the researcher. Furthermore, the financing organization was concerned with reaching a lay audience, and pressure was exerted to reduce the number of tables and footnotes and to minimize the technical character of the discussion. However, the author felt that such things were important to report the research adequately. Acceptance of the funding also carried with it certain public relations obligations to publicize the findings for the organization.

A much more severe example of the apparent subordination of research to the ends of the granting agency is illustrated in a remarkable case described by Cain (1967). In 1959 two sociologists received a \$20,000 grant for a national survey of, among other things, the medical needs of aged Americans. The funds were made available by the Foundation for Voluntary Welfare, a subsidiary of another foundation described as conservative in outlook. One of the investigators was reported to be a consultant for a committee of the American Medical Association (AMA).

On the basis of approximately 1,500 interviews conducted throughout the country one of the researchers and a representative of the Foundation for Voluntary Welfare held a news conference and issued a press release with the following dramatic conclusions:

Nine out of every ten older persons report they have no unfilled medical needs, and the remainder list lack of money as one of the least important reasons for failure to relieve the needs. . . . The study. . . shows that the aging, like others in our population, are not characteristically dependent, inadequate, ill, or senile. . . . Since all resources are limited, whether of family, kin, private or public agencies, the recognition that the dependent and helpless in our aging population are limited in number, will allow available resources to be applied with discrimination. . . . (in Cain, 1967).

The political message is hardly obscure—the aged neither require nor desire government assistance in meeting their medical problems, so clearly resources should be channeled elsewhere.

This announcement appeared at a time (summer, 1960) when federal medical care was an extremely hot political issue. A Medicare bill was in Congress, the Republican and Democratic Party national conventions were inserting positions on Medicare in their platforms, and the AMA was staunchly opposing any health program of this sort. The AMA immediately picked up the study and held a press conference of its own to ensure national publicity for such notable findings. Its press release declared that the survey "conducted by university sociologists emphatically proves that the great majority of Americans over 65 are capable of financing their own health care and prefer to do it on their own, without Federal Government intervention" (Cain, 1967). The rapid appropriation of the study by the AMA, the fact that the conclusions were at great variance with a large number of other studies published on the subject, and the charged political atmosphere caused many raised eyebrows.

How was it possible that a systematic survey could arrive at such exceptional conclusions? Upon examination it was apparent that some of the survey's questions included a conservative bias in the wording, but more importantly, a number of extraordinary constraints were imposed on the selection of the sample: (1) All respondents were white (blacks and other minority groups were arbitrarily excluded); (2) all respondents were over 65, but there was no attempt to ensure a sample that represented all ages beyond 65; (3) interviewers were instructed to terminate interviews with "senile" individuals (recall that one of the press releases declared that "the study shows...that the aging...are not senile," an outcome entirely predetermined by this procedure); (4) those whose medical needs were most obvious—old people in hospitals, homes for the aged, nursing homes, and similar institutions, and anybody receiving old age assistance, were excluded from the sample; (5) a class quota system deliberately oversampled the wealthy—approximately one-quarter of the interviews were with the "upper and upper-middle class," around two-thirds with the "middle class," and 10 percent with the "lower class." Such factors make the unparalleled research conclusions more understandable. Did the conservative foundation and the investigators conspire to defraud the profession and the public? There is scant explicit evidence, but the case suggests that the foundation, at the least, selected investigators who would safely produce findings consistent with its overall political philosophy.

Sociologist Charles Tilly (1966) argues in connection with the Camelot Project that researchers cannot dismiss the question of their relationship with a granting agency: "Where the sponsor has a visible interest in the outcome and a significant likelihood of acting on the findings, any one of us takes on a measure of responsibility by accepting his support." The Camelot controversy illustrates the nearly infinite complexities that often confront investigators when they attempt an assessment of their responsibilities in a

real situation. Many who participated in the early phases of this army-funded project opposed major aspects of the Defense Department's involvement in the Third World. Most were aware of, or inferred, the compensation the army expected for sinking six million dollars into social research, but they were willing to cooperate despite this, "visible interest in the outcome."

In accepting support from an agency whose aims many found objectionable, numerous justifications were advanced; several are of special relevance here:

1. Though the army furnished the financial backing, it would relinquish control over the scientific execution of the investigation.
2. The intent of the military may be politically nefarious, but social researchers would be able to turn Camelot around for scientific ends.
3. The nature of the topic (and level of financial backing) was such that the contribution to a scientific understanding of social change would be immense and the benefits to strictly military aims would be limited.
4. An understanding of processes of social change would help transform American foreign policy and minimize the role of the military.

The counterpoints were equally abundant and include the following:

1. Though allowed considerable freedom in the research design and execution, the sponsor had already imposed many constraints. Sociologically stimulating problems overlapping with the Defense Department's goals, such as defusing a revolutionary movement, were eligible for investigation; techniques for making a socialist revolution or defusing American military influence were also fascinating but obviously not appropriate for funding.
2. Subverting the aims of Camelot to serve social science rather than the military was dubious in general and difficult to carry out in this particular case, since the developing intellectual interests were not basically at odds with military interests.
3. Attempts to "humanize" the military through personal contact and the provision of better information about the developing world were questionable and might be offset in any case by the counterinfluence of the military on the social scientists. Collaboration with the Defense Department in its world view might gradually change the value commitments and scientific integrity of the participating researchers. As dependency on military financing became established, contract renewals and fresh proposals may increasingly and subtly have reflected the sponsor's needs.
4. Acceptance of support reinforces the legitimacy of the granting institution in the eyes of the public and scientific community, and the Camelot Project was no exception.

Camelot has thrown into relief the complex problems confronting a researcher in accepting financial sponsorship. The case, though extreme, is not atypical. What should be done? First of all, a thorough investigation is in

order of the sponsor's immediate needs and long-range goals, its motives for offering support, its intended application of the conclusions, the level of planned control over the actual execution, and whether misapplication of the findings is probable. Some of these items might be subject to negotiation, but if the resolution remains unsatisfactory, the obvious course is to refuse the backing and to search elsewhere for funds. For instance, there is a Southern foundation for research into black inferiority from which respected scholars have been hesitant to accept support.

If the circumstances are particularly egregious, a further alternative is to encourage other researchers to boycott a particular supporting agency. Some of the trends in federal support of social research, especially in the area of counterinsurgency studies, have provoked a number of researchers to do this. Witness the following declaration published in a major social science journal and signed by "Latin-American specialists" at 96 American college and universities:

[We] shall not participate in any research or other activity ordered or paid for in whole or in part by any military or governmental agency or private corporation unless the involvement of such agency or corporation, and its objectives, is made clear and public. When such involvement is known, the decision to participate is dependent upon ethical and professional-interest considerations herein expressed. We appeal to all professionals and students in the social sciences, history, and other academic fields to adhere to and support our commitment and our purposes. . . . (Southern California Committee on Professional Responsibility, 1969)

B. View from the Receiving End

In securing financial backing researchers are occasionally tempted to misrepresent the planned research for their own ends. This is the obverse facet of the sponsor-researcher relationship—concern is with abuses of the sponsor rather than the sponsor's maltreatment of the recipient. Two realms are particularly troublesome. One is the situation in which the investigator agrees to explore an area of special interest to the sponsor in return for financial assistance on another topic with which he or she is more vitally concerned. A second is misrepresentation of the research aims to the benefactor.

The term *Robin Hooding* has been applied to the arrangement by which commitment to investigate one realm is exchanged for support of that plus another. The usual form of this tradeoff is for the researcher to promise exploration of a fairly applied topic in return for an opportunity to examine broader questions. For instance, it may be contended that a real understanding of consumer preferences and trends in fashions can be achieved only by an in-depth analysis of interpersonal relations and social influence. The degree of accuracy in the researcher's argument for exploring areas

peripheral to the initial question proposed by the sponsoring agency may be problematic.

Outright misrepresentation or deception is a somewhat more serious matter. One mild form occasionally appearing in social research is the practice of "bootlegging"—utilization of a fraction of a grant for a project unrelated to the original proposal. Another is to stretch the implications of proposed research to conform to the goals of the granting institution. In dealing with agencies other than those primarily concerned with supporting basic research, there is a tendency to cast the research proposal in terms fitting the institution's overall goals, whether it be mental health, national defense, improvement of the urban environment, or community development in Latin America. In many cases the mesh of interests is clear, but often the overlap is not so great, and yet the chances of gaining a grant are contingent on the proposal's appropriateness to the agency's mission. Consequently the language in the proposal may be stretched.

IV. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SOCIAL RESEARCHERS

So far we have discussed the researcher's obligations to protect the interests of those who cooperate in the study, the extent of the researcher's responsibility for applications and misapplications of the findings, and problems in dealing with sponsoring institutions. A subtler but increasingly critical concern is with the potentially damaging consequences a particular study may have on the research opportunities of others. This moves in two directions. The misuse of a sponsoring institution's resources and deceptive practices in obtaining them may make it impossible for later researchers to benefit from the source. On the other hand, abuse of people or communities that have been subject to research has sometimes caused a serious curtailment of research possibilities because of the hostility of potential respondents.

For example, anthropologist Kalman Silvert (1967), who was engaged in fieldwork in Chile but not with Project Camelot, reports on the aftermath of the premature termination of that project:

At this moment [July, 1965, just after the demise] not a single survey research study can be done in Chile. Throughout Latin America, quantitative studies have been halted or been impeded, and all scholars, whether in teaching or research, find their actions questioned in direct correlation with the sophistication of the persons with whom they deal.

In recent years various domestic groups have become sensitized to perceived abuses by American social researchers. This is especially the case in minority and low-income urban communities. For example, in 1970

Boston's Black United Front, representing a variety of concerned groups in the metropolitan region, established a Community Research Review Committee for evaluating all social science investigations targeted for the black community. They sought to have all such research approved by themselves and a 10 percent levy on the project's funds to keep the board operational. Some investigators have been barred from the area, including some black researchers (Brody, 1970).

Several professional associations have been considering or have adopted codes of ethics. These are generally designed to eliminate at least the most flagrant violations of the physical and mental well-being of subjects and respondents, to protect the integrity of the profession, and to create an atmosphere maximally conducive to a free and open research process. The American Psychological Association adopted a code in 1959 with provisions ranging from sanctions against misrepresentation of data, protection of confidentiality, the issuance of public statements, to the allocation of publication credit. Similar statements emerged from the American anthropological, sociological, and political science associations in the late 1960s.¹ The early lead of the psychologists perhaps reflects their more direct contact with people in situations controlled by the investigator. The impact of experimental research on participants is more obvious, tangible, and immediate than in the case of surveys and field studies.

The codes have generally had the status of guidelines rather than imperatives, since little formal machinery exists to prevent or handle infractions. Many universities have established committees that review research plans prior to execution if human subjects are involved, and this is now required by the U.S. Surgeon General for institutions receiving Public Health Service grants. The American Psychological Association has established a review procedure with mild sanctions for enforcing its code; a Committee on Scientific and Professional Ethics and Conduct hears and evaluates complaints of violations. It may apply several penalties: The most severe is exclusion from membership in the association of a person found in fault; for unethical conduct of a lesser sort the committee may "administer a reprimand or place a member under surveillance for a stated period. (The procedures are described in American Psychological Association Committee on Scientific and Professional Ethics and Conduct, 1968, 1977. Selected cases brought to the attention of the committee are briefly described along with its opinion and action in American Psychological Association, 1967.)

The American Political Science Association has established a Committee on Professional Ethics, which is empowered to consider questions of ethical conduct of association members, but its procedures are much less elaborate and its action limited for the time being to the issuance of advisory opinions. The American Sociological Association and the American Anthropological Association have established similar procedures.

V. THE LEGAL SITUATION

On occasion social research may lead to various legal entanglements, though only rarely have social scientists been involved in judicial proceedings.² Consequently the discussion here is somewhat hypothetical: What legal implications might befall the researcher? Three realms are particularly sensitive or susceptible: Action by the state to gain information gathered through research, engagement of the researcher in illegal activities as part of the investigation process, and court action by participants for personal damage suffered because of the research.

A. Action by the State to Secure Research Information

In 1960 an American student movement was hardly existent, but by the spring of 1970 hundreds of campuses were striking in protest over national and local political issues. Paralleling this massive formation of a university political movement, and pervasive unrest among students, increasing numbers of social scientists had shifted attention to describing and analyzing these trends. In 1966 the American Council on Education (ACE) initiated an extensive longitudinal study of students at over 300 colleges. Lengthy questionnaires have been administered several times. These probe, among other things, a student's political attitudes and involvement in protest activity. In 1969, with campus rebellions reaching unprecedented levels, the council launched a second companion study, which consisted of intensive case studies of significant protest movements on more than 20 campuses. Information was assembled through in-depth interviews with students, faculty, and administrators on the affected campuses and from available materials and documents. The intention was to increase understanding of the social processes associated with campus unrest and to assess the characteristics of protest-prone students and schools.

This research was disputed for a variety of reasons, but in particular many people feared that identifiable information would fall into the hands of government agencies investigating student political movements. During the spring of 1969 a Senate committee announced it would begin subpoenaing information for its study of campus violence. Various agencies in the Justice and Defense departments were known to be compiling dossiers on nearly everybody involved in protest activities, and many observers sensed the growth of an atmosphere of officially sanctioned repression. To avert a calamitous engulfing of the study's data in such developments, the council established an advisory committee consisting primarily of prominent social scientists. It recommended that all those affiliated with the project's staff maintain complete protection over confidential information. Aimed at alleviating the worst fears of some, the guidelines urged total noncoopera-

tion: "[We] advise and counsel all researchers in this study to refuse to release or provide any confidential information, even if directed to do so by subpoena or other court process from a legislative body or court of law" (American Council of Education, Advisory Committee for Campus Unrest and Change, 1969).

Are there no legal protections against a subpoena? Apparently there are not. An obvious defense might be to claim "privileged communication" status for the researcher-respondent relationship paralleling the attorney-client situation. Though this privilege has been extended to cover the relations of husband-wife, doctor-patient, priest-penitent, and a few others under very restrictive conditions, the researcher-respondent tie has never been included. There is one interesting exemplary case in which a person had communicated in confidence with both a psychiatrist and a psychologist. When this individual was later brought to trial, under state law the psychiatrist (as a physician) was exempted from testifying about the conversation, but the psychologist (who lacked medical credentials) was required to reveal the confidences.

Researchers in the social sciences are afforded no immunities, regardless of promises of confidentiality granted respondents in eliciting information. There are protective measures to be taken, however. Identification of individuals, organizations, and institutions can be deleted from all records. If this cannot be easily accomplished, as in longitudinal studies wherein respondents are contacted several times, a variety of defensive measures can be taken. The simplest is to code the names of all individuals and organizations and preserve the code location separate from the data. In the case of the longitudinal study of the American Council of Education all information is maintained on one set of computer tapes and identities of individuals corresponding to the information are preserved on a separate tape. The identification tape is deposited in a vault that is said to include a "fail-safe" security system, blocking access to all except the director of the study. In general, once the study is completed, the investigator is advised to destroy at least identifying materials in his or her files and perhaps sensitive documents. Often this can be accomplished even while the research is in progress, once the information is collected.

Suppose a subpoena arrives. The social scientist might be required either to testify or to produce part or all of the records. There may be grounds for refusing to testify on the basis of potential self-incrimination. This is a limited privilege, however, since it only applies to information that may result in the researcher's own criminal prosecution. The court and not the social scientist witness retains final discretion over whether this may be properly invoked. In any case the court may grant immunity from prosecution and require testimony. The social scientist can choose to be uncooperative with the court by neither testifying nor producing requested

materials. This is the option proposed by the advisory committee on the American Council of Education study, and such a procedure has been adopted by other researchers. However, the result could be criminal contempt of court, which can entail a fine and a six-months imprisonment (or in the case of a grand jury investigation incarceration for the life of the grand jury, which may be well over a year). As a preemptive move the researcher could destroy or claim loss of records if there is reason to believe a subpoena is forthcoming, but if it is evident that such action was taken to avoid compliance, contempt may still be the outcome.

B. Participation in Criminally Prosecutable Activity

Exploration of various activities, particularly as a participant observer, can lead the researcher into action for which criminal prosecution is possible. For instance, in studies of drug and hip culture, radical and underground political movements, juvenile delinquency, or organized crime it is likely that involvement will require the researcher to participate in acts defined as illegal. Though these actions are undertaken largely in the name of social science, the investigator is afforded no special protection against prosecution. Most researchers are aware of these risks before entering the situation, but two fringe areas are troublesome because of their ambiguity. Perhaps most frequent in research on legally marginal contexts is the *commission of misprision*—failure to prevent a felony from occurring or neglecting to bring information about a committed felony to the attention of the proper authorities. The possibility of misprision is illustrated in a study of delinquency among poor Chicano youth described by Brymer and Farris (1967). As a special feature of the investigation a young person marginal to the neighborhood was persuaded to become affiliated with a gang as a secret observer. He was privy to inside information and at one point became aware that his gang was considering a retaliatory attack against a rival group. Failure to report this information, if the encounter materialized and a felony were committed, would constitute grounds for a charge of misprision, although in this particular instance the attack was not carried out.

The second problematic area concerns the potential involvement of the researcher as an accessory to a crime, both before and after the fact. Liability as an accessory before the commission of a crime results if the investigator encourages the crime in some direct way (e.g., counseling its commission) but is absent during its execution. A researcher who personally aids a felon after the commission of a crime, knowing that the person had been so engaged, is liable as an accessory after the fact. Accessorial liability before the crime is rarely if ever a problem for social researchers, but postcrime accessory actions are frequently encountered by those working in underground or illegal subcultures.

C. Action by Respondents Against the Researcher

The two areas just discussed involve action by the state against the researcher. It is also possible that the participants, respondents, or subjects in a study may have grounds for initiating action against the researcher for abridgment of their rights. Civil liability is most likely in two facets of the research process—invasion of privacy and infliction of mental discomfort.

Social researchers are granted no special immunity from charges of violating a person's privacy; their protections are the same as the layman's. Approximately three-fourths of the states honor personal privacy rights. Violation of these rights may occur in either the collection or publication of information.

Privacy includes the right to be left alone, and the gathering of information on someone's personal life or affairs beyond reasonable and decent limits constitutes an abridgment of this right. Violation may include such indirect means as eavesdropping. If a person consents to observation, then the social researcher is in a defensible position, but the consent usually must be in writing, and the information collected cannot exceed the limits agreed upon in the original accord. The right to privacy is relinquished once the individual enters a public situation, however, whereupon all of his or her actions may be freely observed. Publication of private information about an individual, or for that matter any type of public disclosure, may also constitute a breach of the right to privacy. The individual must be identifiable in the material, and it must be objectionable. Research publications generally attempt to maintain anonymity, but we have seen that these protections are far from foolproof, and many of the respondents have found public presentations personally embarrassing. On the other hand, with regard to published materials, the right to individual privacy is normally balanced against the need for an informed public. The relative merits of these two rights depends on the exact nature of the information, and in any case there is considerable ambiguity on this issue. It should be apparent that a considerable amount of social research comes very close to violating the general right to privacy. Many participant observation studies, especially when the emphasis is on disguised observation, appear to infringe upon private concerns without proper consent. In published materials there are numerous examples where personal identities have been inadequately protected, and the consequent humiliation in some cases may also constitute an invasion of privacy. However, it is very rare in social research for respondents to take civil action against an investigator for violations of this sort.

In some cases in the past several decades the right to avoid physical injury has been extended to include the severest forms of psychological harm. Petty annoyances and similar forms of distress are not generally

covered, but action that is intended to cause and does cause mental pain to an "outrageous" extreme is typically included. If a person voluntarily submits to the infliction of acute distress, the action may be defensible, but the consent must be informed. Many psychological experiments depend on the artificial induction of at least mild states of anxiety, malaise, or distress, and often the design of these experiments mandates that the participant not be told about this beforehand. The experiment described earlier on obedience to authority, in which a volunteer was instructed to deliver electric shocks to a slow-learning companion, depended on the volunteer's naiveté. It was clear that a fully informed consent was not feasible, but it was also apparent that some volunteers experienced acute mental anguish as a result of being ordered, in the name of science, to shock a companion to insensibility. As with privacy rights, legal action has seldom if ever been initiated against social researchers for causing mental discomfort. In both realms the possibility remains, however, and careful thought should be given to the possible legal (as well as the ethical) implications of unusual research procedures.

SOME BROADER QUESTIONS

In the prior discussion little attention has been addressed to the subtler effects of the social context in which researchers are situated and the consequent political implications for their work. Thomas Kuhn has suggested that scientific disciplines develop paradigms, or world views, that structure the kinds of questions scientists explore. The specific nature of these paradigms is primarily determined by internal intellectual developments in the discipline. However, it can be argued that the social sciences, much more than the physical sciences used by Kuhn to establish his analysis, are based on paradigms heavily shaped by forces outside the social science community itself. For instance, ideologies current in the broader society may color a paradigm, as may the structural relationship of the social science professions to other institutions in the society.

Dominant institutions in America, such as the federal government, foundations, and corporations exert a relatively strong influence on the research interests pursued by the social sciences, through a variety of mechanisms. Collectively they control most of the research funds, dispense various status and monetary rewards (e.g., consultantships, membership on commissions and advisory boards) for contributions deemed outstanding, and exercise at least partial control over many organizations that employ social scientists, such as the universities. Consequently the needs of these powerful institutions may provide significant shaping of the research directions of the social science disciplines. For instance, Alvin Gouldner

argues that the advent of the "welfare state" in America, with its concern for limited reform rather than wholesale transformation of the society, has helped create a new breed of social researchers. The powerful agencies that administer the welfare state need information on the social condition and social organization of the poor, women, blacks, labor, and other less favored segments of the system for designing appropriate ameliorative programs. Systematic assessment of the programs' impact and effectiveness is a task dependent on the cooperation of large numbers of social researchers, and there are a variety of pressures placed on the social science community to orient at least part of its energy to the collection and analysis of needed information.

Some social scientists view the emergence of the welfare state and its needs for social research as a desirable development and willingly offer their services. They argue that their involvement helps to introduce needed historical and comparative perspectives, compassion, and expertise. Reformist improvements in the society are seen as limited but nevertheless positive gains, especially when programs include the massive infusion of funds. The external shaping of research directions is felt to be healthy, in that it encourages the social sciences to orient themselves toward immediate contributions to human welfare.

Other social researchers have more pessimistic views concerning the utility of social science to the welfare state. Knowledge often has divergent implications, the complexity of the world makes difficult the gathering of information with clear policy implications, and in any event past experience suggests that policy-makers place relatively low priority on social research data in making decisions (see Weiss and Bacavulas 1980). Still others feel that government bureaucracies are making real use of social science information but see this as academically ominous or politically distasteful. Academically, the subtle but massive intrusion of extrascientific criteria into decisions shaping the course of research may be seen as a distortion of the purpose of social science and the subordination of social research to the requirements of the state. Politically it is argued that social change is better served by making the resources of the social science community available to political groups and movements pushing for change rather than to government policy-makers.

In any case the welfare state is beginning to use social science information more extensively and more effectively than ever before. However, the processes by which America's dominant institutions shape the disciplines to this end are relatively subtle, and individual investigators may be only vaguely aware of how their own research interests are affected.

It should be apparent that the social research process involves innumerable ethical and political considerations. Some of the problems confronted are of minor significance, but others are crucial. Some are

foreseeable and perhaps avoidable; others are not. Sometimes ethically questionable procedures are intentionally utilized to avoid greater problems or even to carry out the research. In some cases adverse consequences are apparent, but in others they are indirect and subtle. Certain problems result not from willful use of unethical procedures but from failure to take precautionary measures. Many of the political issues noted are unavoidable, given the political character of such social science information. Of course, contact with people and organizations in the collection of information may be cordial, and there may be many beneficial aspects from publication. There are situations, however, in which the effects are substantially detrimental in one way or another to participants, sponsors, the profession, or other groups. The intention of much of the present discussion has been to suggest that such implications be carefully considered and research strategies be designed that will minimize adverse consequences. It is the task of the researcher to carefully weigh the relative ethical and political costs and advantages of various alternative procedures prior to undertaking an investigation. Unlike the relatively unambiguous and more readily applied methodological guidelines suggested by many of the other chapters here, we have offered few clear solutions. However, we hope there has been some sensitization to the many subtle nonquantitative problems and challenges faced in doing social research.

NOTES

¹For a statement of the psychologist's code see American Psychological Association, 1968, 1977. Also see American Sociological Association, 1968, 1971; American Anthropological Association, Committee on Ethics, 1969, 1973; Society for Applied Anthropology, 1963-64, 1975; American Political Science Association Committee on Professional Standards and Responsibility, 1968.

²Much of the material appearing in this section is based on a memorandum by Henry C. Hagen for the American Bar Foundation and on a paper prepared by Barry C. Feld.

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