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THE RIGHTS OF THE SUBJECT IN SOCIAL RESEARCH: AN ANALYSIS IN TERMS OF RELATIVE POWER AND LEGITIMACY[1]

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THE increasing use of social research in American society and its increasing relevance to public policy and social decisions have engendered widespread concerns about the ethical implications of such research activities. Briefly, these concerns are of two kinds: (*a*) concerns relating to the *processes* of social research, which are exemplified best by the issue of invasion of privacy and its various ramifications; and (*b*) concerns relating to the *products* of social research, which focus largely on the fear that social research may provide tools for controlling and manipulating human behavior and, more specifically, that these tools may be used by some segments of the society at the expense of others.

Along with many social scientists, I share the conviction that both the process and the products of social research—both the attempt to ask systematic and analytic questions about human behavior and social institutions, and the answers provided by these attempts—are potentially liberating forces in our society. Social research, in my admittedly biased view, can and does contribute to enhancing the freedom of choice of the individual and to expanding the range of choices available to him. Yet, the ethical concerns about social research that are being voiced increasingly—both within and outside of the social science community—reflect the fear that the very process of social research itself or the knowledge it produces may bring about limitations of individual freedom. Thus, the concern about invasion of privacy dwells on the prospect that the individual's freedom of choice about the extent and nature of his participation in social research—and thus about what may be a significant segment of his personal life—may be restricted. The concern about control of human behavior dwells on the prospect that knowledge produced by social research may be used to reduce the individual's freedom to act in terms of his own values and interests.

The ethical problems surrounding social research, with their direct implications for human freedom, can be conceptualized in terms of the power relationship between the subjects of social research, on the one hand, and the social scientist, as well as the sponsor and user of social research, on the other hand. Ethical problems arise because of the fact that—and to the extent that—the individuals, groups, and communities that provide the data for social research are deficient in power relative to the other participants in the research process. I shall touch occasionally on the power relationships among these other participants themselves—such as that between the researcher and the research sponsor—which raise significant issues in their own right (often with implications for the research subject). The primary focus of the present analysis, however, shall be on the relative power position of the research subject.

THE POWER DEFICIENCY OF THE SUBJECT IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

The power deficiency that often characterizes the subject in social research can be traced to two

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sources: (*a*) his position of relative disadvantage within the social system—that is, the society in general and the particular organization in which the research is conducted; and (*b*) his position of relative disadvantage within the research situation proper. In other words, subjects for social research tend to be recruited from the relatively powerless segments of the society or organization and thus come into the research situation at a disadvantage. This disadvantage is further exacerbated by their limited power within the structure of the research situation itself.

The Subject's Position within the Social System

A great deal of social research is carried out on groups that are in some sense disadvantaged within the society: children and old people, ethnic minorities and welfare recipients, mental patients and invalids, criminals and delinquents, drug addicts and alcoholics, college sophomores and military recruits. These groups are dependent and powerless by virtue of their age, their physical and mental condition, their economic and political position, their educational level, their social deviance, or their captive status within various institutions.

Various reasons can be cited for the tendency to focus so much social research on disadvantaged groups. To a large extent, this tendency is a reflection of what is taken as problematic within the society and within its research community (cf. Kelman, 1970b, pp. 82–84). Two strands of problem definition seem to be converging on the disadvantaged groups. On the one hand, the established segments of society are concerned with the control of social deviance and the management of social dependency. Insofar as social scientists themselves tend to come from the middle classes, they share this concern. More importantly, however, this concern is part of the mission of many of the agencies, both public and private, that sponsor social research, and is, therefore, reflected in the kinds of research questions to which investigators address themselves and hence the populations from whom they seek their data. On the other hand, many social scientists—and some of the agencies sponsoring social research—are rooted in a tradition of "social problems" research and strongly committed to social welfare and social reform. They are concerned with helping individuals and communities who, for one or another reason, are troubled and powerless. This concern often leads them to focus their research on the disadvantaged groups themselves. In short, social research —whether out of a concern with social control or social change or some combination of the two—often has defined its problems in a way that calls for subjects from among the disadvantaged segments of th society.

Another important reason for the tendency to draw disproportionately on disadvantaged groups in the recruitment of subjects for social research is the greater availability of these groups. Practical considerations of availability of subjects often determine which of a number of potentially relevant populations an investigator studies. In fact, an investigator may study a population less relevant to his problem simply because it is more available, or he even may choose his research problem in terms of considerations of availability. In general, members of disadvantaged groups are more readily available precisely because of their power deficiency. Investigators can induce them more easily to participate in research that members of more powerful groups would find objectionable, and more securely expect them to put up with procedures that higher status subjects would challenge. In most cases, they lack both the ability and the habit of "talking back." Rightly or wrongly, they perceive themselves as having no choice, particularly since the investigators are usually higher in status and since the agencies sponsoring and conducting the research may represent (or at least appear to represent) the very groups on which the subjects are dependent. The link between dependence and availability is, of course, very direct in those situations in which the research is conducted in the context of an institution where the subject is held "captive" or is in a clearly defined position of lower status. The institutionalized child, the hospitalized patient, the prison or reformatory inmate, the army recruit, and the grade school pupil are almost automatically available as subjects for research conducted or approved by institutional authorities. Similarly, though the university is not a "total institution" in the same sense as a mental hospital or a prison (cf. Goffman, 1961), psychological and social research has relied so heavily on college sophomores for its subjects because of their relative availability in that organizational context.

The last examples call attention to the fact that the subject's power deficiency often is based not only on his position in the society at large, but also on his position within the particular organization in which the research is conducted. Typically, research in organizational contexts is sponsored by those in high-status positions who "own" the organization, while the data are obtained from those in low-status positions. For example, social research in industry usually is sponsored by top management, but the data are provided by blue-collar workers and now more frequently by middle-level management. Insofar as the research is related to the way in which the organization is run—to questions of personnel policies, for instance—it has direct consequences for members in lower status positions. Yet the research usually is focused on those issues that top management considers problematic. The less powerful segments of the organization generally lack the familiarity with social research as a potentially useful tool for their own purposes, the financial and manpower resources to carry out such research, and the ability to elicit the ready cooperation of the organization's higher echelons.

The uneven distribution of resources also plays a major role in the selection of societies and communities as subjects for social research. At this level too we find a considerable discrepancy in power between those who conduct social research and those who serve as its subjects. Social scientists from the more affluent and powerful industrialized nations often go to developing countries to carry out their research; very rarely, however, do African, Asian, or Latin American social scientists come to study conditions in the more industrialized parts of the world. Similarly, within the United States, social research often has been carried out by members of the white middle class, collecting their data in black, Puerto Rican, Indian, or poor white communities; very rarely has the pattern been reversed. Thus, within the context of the international system or the national system, we see again that the subjects for social research tend to be drawn from the communities in disadvantaged and relatively powerless positions. The more powerful communities are generally the only ones who have the resources to carry out social research and who are thus in a position to define what is problematic. At the same time, they are better able to resist intrusions from the outside and thus to avoid being studied themselves.

In sum, the subjects in social research tend to be drawn disproportionately from the disadvantaged segments in the society, from the lower status positions in the organizations in which the research is carried out, and from the less affluent and powerful communities in the national and international systems. Their power deficiency within the social system places them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the more powerful agencies that sponsor and conduct the research. It increases their vulnerability with respect both to their recruitment as subjects and to their treatment in the research situation. That is, they have (or at least feel that they have) less freedom to refuse participation in the research and less leverage to protect themselves against procedures that they may find objectionable. Furthermore, the subjects' power deficiency reduces the likelihood that the products of the research will accrue to their benefit. Their own groups typically have no voice in determining the questions to which the research is to be addressed, in terms of *their* definition of what is problematic, nor do they have the resources to make use of the research findings. Thus, the subjects lack the power to counteract the possibility that the research in which they participate may be irrelevant or even antagonistic to their own interests.

The Subject's Position within the Research Situation

Regardless of his position in society, the subject's position within the research situation itself generally places him at a disadvantage. The investigator usually defines and takes charge of the situation on his own terms and in line with his own values and norms, and the subject has only limited opportunity to question the procedures. This is particularly true when the research is carried out in a setting "owned" by the investigator (such as a research laboratory) and utilizes structured techniques (such as experimental tasks, questionnaires, interviews, or psychological tests). Once a person agrees to come to the laboratory or to carry out a research procedure, he subjects himself to the control of the investigator—as the very use of the term "subject" implies. When the research is carried out in a setting owned by the subject and takes the form of observing the natural flow of ongoing behavior (as in studies of organizations or communities utilizing participant observation), the investigator's control is far less extensive. He is not in a position to structure the behavior of his subjects and he is expected to adhere to the norms of the setting. Yet, even in this type of research, once members of an organization or community open their doors to an investigator, they relinquish a considerable degree of their control to him, since they usually have only limited knowledge of what is being observed and to what use these observations will be put. Of course, if observations are carried out without the subjects' knowledge, then their control of the situation is reduced even further.

The power deficiency of the subject within the research situation derives from the structure of that situation itself, rather than from the subject's position in the society or organization. The situation-linked disadvantage of the subject, however, is especially pronounced if his societal or organizational status is relatively low. Low-status and dependent subjects do not have—or at least do not avail themselves of—the full degree of countervailing power with which the research situation provides the subject. Potentially, the subject's power in his relationship with the investigator is not inconsiderable, since the investigator's ability to carry out his research ultimately depends on the subject's cooperation. Although the subject relinquishes control over the situation once he agrees to participate, he must first be induced to enter into the agreement; and, furthermore, if he finds the situation sufficiently distasteful, he may withdraw from the agreement despite the embarrassment that such a step would entail. But subjects who occupy low-status or dependent positions in the society or organization are less likely to see themselves as having the option to refuse participation in the research, or to withdraw once they have entered the situation.[3] Compared to higher status subjects, they are more reluctant to question or challenge the investigator, and—even if they were inclined to raise questions—they usually have less of the knowledge required to raise them effectively. They still have some power in the situation—the power to undermine the research by providing false information, performing the required task improperly, or engaging in some other form of subtle sabotage. Such efforts at undermining research have become a very real possibility, for example, in laboratory experiments in psychology carried out on college campuses, often with a more or less captive subject population. Typically, however, subjects will not engage in deliberate acts of sabotage, as long as they accept the legitimacy of the investigator and the research situation.

Two closely interrelated factors limit the subject's exercise of power in the research situation: he perceives himself as lacking both the *capacity* and the *right* to question the research procedures. Although the strength of these factors is likely to vary, as we have already seen, as a function of the subject's position in the society or organization, basically they are built into the structure of the research situation. The subject feels that he lacks the capacity to question research procedures because he does not have the necessary informational base for doing so. It is usually presumed, particularly if the research is carried out in an institutional setting (such as a university or a hospital), that the investigator has the credentials required for running the study. If he did not, then presumably he would not be there. Thus, the subject usually takes it for granted that the investigator knows what he is doing and that he is proceeding from information that the subject himself could not possibly have. Not only does the investigator have expertise and specialized knowledge in the field which the subject usually does not possess, but he is also operating in a situation that is constructed entirely by him and defined in his own terms. The investigator is the only one who knows the dimensions of the situation, who knows the nature of the business to be transacted and the way in which it is to be transacted. Under the circumstances, the subject feels that he lacks the information that would enable him to question the

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[3] There are some interesting exceptions to this generalization. Survey researchers often have noted that the rate of refusal encountered by interviewers ringing doorbells tends to be relatively higher among poor respondents. This tendency is probably due to the fact that the poor (and particularly the uneducated) respondent (*a*) is less likely to have a cognitive framework to which he can relate the request for an interview, (*b*) is more likely to feel that he has no opinions on the topic of the interview, and (*c*) is more likely to be suspicious of a middle-class stranger with pad and pencil in hand, who is reminiscent of a welfare investigator or other such official. For all of these reasons, when given the option, the poor respondent may prefer not to become involved. When research is carried out in an institutional context, however, he is likely to feel that he has no option and that his participation is one of the obligations of his dependent role—unless, of course, resistance is mobilized through an organized effort.

investigator's actions, to challenge him, or to disagree with him.

The investigator's specialized knowledge and expertise are a major component of his perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the subject. That is, his expertness contributes to the subject's view that the investigator has the right to set rules and prescribe behavior in this situation, and that the subject, in turn—having submitted himself to the investigator's authority—does not have the right to question these procedures. Clearly, there are limits to what a subject will do without question, and these limits are reached more quickly in some situations than in others and by some subjects than by others. There is considerable evidence, however, that at least in certain laboratory situations, many subjects will engage in behaviors that are highly distasteful and potentially harmful to themselves or to others when such behaviors are required by the experimenter (e.g., Milgram, 1963; Orne & Evans, 1965). At the very least it can be said that, insofar as subjects accept the investigator's legitimacy, they are reluctant to *claim* the right to question his procedures.

The investigator's presumed expertness is one of a number of features of the research situation that jointly enhance his legitimacy in the eyes of the subjects and hence his relative power over them. There are usually indications that the investigator's role is socially recognized and supported. He often carries out the research in the name of or under the sponsorship of an official agency or prestigious institution. When the research actually is carried out in the setting of a university or a hospital or a government facility, then the institutional aura of legitimacy spreads to the research situation. The investigator may also be covered and surrounded by some of the trappings of legitimacy—such as the white coat, the sign on the door, the diploma on the wall, or the expensive equipment. Furthermore, legitimacy that inheres in other institutional roles often is transferred to the research situation; for example, when research on students is carried out or sponsored by a professor, research on patients by a physician, or research on citizens by a government agency, the investigator's legitimacy in the research situation is enhanced by his relationship to the subject outside of the research situation. Finally, a major contributor to the investigator's perceived legitimacy is the acceptance of science as a general value within the society. The subject feels obliged to cooperate with and reluctant to question procedures that are presented to him in the name of science. In the context of a scientific study, he does not feel entitled to challenge the investigator merely because he finds a procedure personally uncomfortable or distasteful.

It is interesting to note that, in some sense, the value society places on science gives the scientific investigator even greater power over his subject than the physician has over his patient in the usual medical relationship. The physician has a great deal of power because he possesses specialized knowledge and expertise that the patient does not have, particularly since this knowledge relates to questions of life and death for the patient; because he is higher in social status than the average patient; and because he is supported fully by the trappings of legitimacy. Yet, the fact remains that the physician's task is to serve the patient and to meet his interests. Ultimately, the patient is expected to follow his instructions because it is in his own interest to do so. The instructions of the scientist, on the other hand, are not even subject to that restriction, since they are legitimized by a social value that supposedly transcends the interests of the individual subject. Thus, the subject does not have the "right"—as does the patient—to bring his own interests into consideration. Clearly, the position of greatest power vis-à-vis the subject is held by the medical researcher, since he can draw both on the physician's link to matters of life and death and on the scientist's link to overarching values. The social and behavioral scientist does not have quite as great a power advantage over his subject, but he too operates in a research situation whose structure and governing values make it difficult for the subject to question its procedures.

Counteracting the Subject's Power Deficiency

The basic thesis of this article is that most ethical problems arising in social research can be traced to the subject's power deficiency, as described in the last two sections, and that therefore a major way of dealing with these ethical problems is to seek mechanisms for overcoming or counteracting this deficiency. Before presenting in more specific detail some of the ethical problems that arise in social research and some of the corrective approaches one might use, let me indicate in general terms what forms such approaches would have to take.

The most obvious way of counteracting the subject's power deficiency is to develop mechanisms for increasing his power over the research—his power over the questions to which the research is to address itself, over the selection of participants, over the procedures to be employed, and over the uses to which the findings will be put. Insofar as the subject's power deficiency is based on his position in society, his power could be enhanced by extending the range of participation in social research within the society—by seeing to it that all segments of the society have equal opportunity to carry out research and equal likelihood of being called on to serve as subjects. Such a state of affairs would, of course, not assure that the subjects in any given study are as powerful in terms of their social position as the investigator, but it would reduce the systematic imbalance of the current situation in which investigators as a group are more powerful than subjects as a group. Insofar as the subject's power deficiency is based on his position within the research situation, his power could be enhanced by exploring models of research that would allow the subject more equal participation in the whole research process. Such models presuppose active efforts to share information with the subjects so that they would have the capacity to participate in meaningful ways.

Although these ways of empowering the subject require major revisions in the structure and methodology of social research, it is both possible and, in my view, highly desirable to consider such revisions. I suggest in later sections some mechanisms for moving in these directions. Even at best, however, I do not think it possible to eliminate entirely all discrepancies in power between subject and investigator.

As far as discrepancies based on position within the society are concerned, there are some groups that often provide subjects but that cannot, by their very nature, provide investigators. Children are the best example of such a group; other examples might be mental patients, criminals, or illiterates. When members of these groups serve as subjects, they are involved of necessity in an unequal relationship, since there is no real possibility of role reversal. The only alternative would be to refrain from using these groups as research subjects, but such a solution would entail an excessively high social cost. It would rule out research that might be of great value to society in general, as well as to the particular groups in question.

There are other disadvantaged groups—for example, blacks and other ethnic minorities—that can be brought into fuller participation in the research process. Even here, however, the power discrepancies between the investigator and subject are removed only partially. Certainly, the overall power deficiency of black ghetto residents who serve as subjects for social research would be reduced greatly if blacks were represented fully in the social science community and if it were as common for black social scientists to study white subjects as it has been for whites to study black subjects. Yet, blacks who are trained and employed as social scientists, although they are closer to the black ghetto by virtue of their race and sometimes by virtue of their class origin, are themselves in higher status positions within the society than the average ghetto dweller. Thus, even if all research in black ghettos were carried out by black social scientists (which I would find undesirable for reasons to be mentioned later), the power discrepancy between subject and investigator would not be eliminated. If nothing else, the level of education required of a social scientist places him in a position of greater advantage within the society than that held by many of his subjects. Thus, a certain degree of discrepancy in power is inherent in the very social role of the researcher.

As far as discrepancies based on position within the research situation itself are concerned, it is even more obvious that they cannot be removed totally. Although it is possible to strip the research situation of some of its unnecessary mystique and to provide opportunities for genuine participation on the part of the subjects, it is generally impossible to extend to the subject equal control over the situation. Because of his specialized knowledge, the investigator must have greater power than the subject in determining the design and methodology of the research and hence in defining the conditions of the research situation. In most cases, an investigator who claims to be sharing this power equally with his subjects is either pretending (perhaps to himself as well as to his subjects) that he has relinquished power while subtly maintaining control or sacrificing the quality of his research.

If we assume then that the subject's power over the research cannot be increased in all cases to the level of equality with the investigator—that even at best the investigator will have in many cases a more powerful position in society than his subjects, and that in some respects he must have greater power within the research situation—what other mechanisms can serve to counteract the subject's power deficiency? My general answer to this question is that we must find ways of assuring that investigators will use their power in legitimate rather than arbitrary fashion. Insofar as they use their power legitimately, the subject's relative power would in effect be enhanced indirectly.

The concept of legitimacy generally is applied to political systems, but it is equally applicable to any social system, including that defined by the investigator–subject relationship. I cannot discuss here the concept in detail, but I can list some of the central criteria that would have to be met if the use of power—in any system—is to be regarded as legitimate: (*a*) Those who exercise power and those over whom it is exercised must constitute a community, sharing common values and norms. (*b*) These norms must include some rules that define the limits within which the power holder must operate—the domain of behavior over which he is entitled to exercise his control, the circumstances under which he may use his power, and the manner in which he may use it; he can be held accountable whenever he violates these rules by going beyond the permissible limits of his power. (*c*) The person over whom power is exercised must have recourse to mechanisms (such as courts, an ombudsman, public agencies, or ethics committees) through which he can question, challenge, or complain about the way power is being exercised over him, and he must have the assurance that these mechanisms are not stacked against him; in short, he must have some countervailing power that enables him to protect and defend his own interests in the face of demands from the authorities.

These criteria are meant, for the present purposes, to combine both normative and empirical considerations. That is, I am proposing that these are criteria that a system *ought* to meet in order to conform to a normative conception of legitimacy that I happen to share. At the same time, however, I assume that these are criteria that a system *has* to meet in order to be perceived as functioning legitimately by its members (at least within western societies, although I would hypothesize that some variant of these criteria is universally applicable). In other words, insofar as the authorities in a system exercise their power in accordance with these criteria, the members of the system will perceive their demands as legitimate and in general comply with them willingly. It should be noted that, in one sense, meeting these criteria enhances the power of the authorities, since it helps them attain the willing cooperation of the system members. To achieve this effect, however, the authorities must accept limits on the use of their power and must contend with the countervailing power available to system members. In effect, therefore, when power in a system is exercised legitimately, the relative power of the system member (the "subject") vis-à-vis the power holder is increased.[4]

The implications of this analysis for the relationship between subject and investigator in social research can be seen readily. The subject's power deficiency presents the danger that the researcher and the research sponsor may use their power over him in illegitimate fashion. Many of the ethical concerns that social research has generated in fact can be conceptualized in terms of the potentially illegitimate exercise of this power. To deal with these concerns effectively, therefore, we must develop mechanisms to insure that the researcher's power will be used in legitimate fashion. Insofar as possible, it would be desirable to increase the subject's direct power over the research by pro-

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[4] In speaking of the legitimate use of power, I am going beyond my earlier remarks about the characteristics of the investigator and of the setting that enhance his legitimacy in the eyes of the subjects and hence his power over them. Both cases involve legitimacy in the sense that the subject accepts the right of the investigator to make certain demands of him and to set his behavior in the situation (cf. Kelman, 1969). However, when perception of legitimacy is based (as in my earlier discussion) on the extent to which the investigator displays the trappings of legitimacy and the situation invokes the symbols of legitimacy, then it has the effect of discouraging the subject from questioning or challenging the investigator's procedures. On the other hand, when the perception of legitimacy is based on the extent to which the investigator uses his power within a shared normative framework that sets limits on his behavior and makes him accountable for exceeding these limits, then the right to question and challenge the investigator's procedures is built into the relationship. The subject accepts the investigator's right to make demands precisely because this right is balanced by the subject's right to question these demands. Thus, mechanisms designed to enhance the appearance of legitimacy should not be confused with mechanisms designed to assure that power is exercised in legitimate fashion.

viding opportunities for his (and his group's) participation in the process; since there are inherent limitations to such participation, however, it is essential to provide him with countervailing power that would enable him to protect his own interests in his relationship to the research. I shall proceed to examine within this framework, first, some of the ethical problems relating to the processes of social research, and then some of the problems relating to the products of social research.

Ethical Problems Relating to the Processes of Social Research

In speaking of the processes of social research, I refer to the experiences of the specific individuals (or groups or communities) who participate in the research as subjects—who provide the data for it. How are they recruited for the experiment, the survey, or the community study in which they participate? How are they treated in the course of these procedures—that is, what kinds of experience do these represent for them? What are the consequences of their participation for them, both in the short run and in the long run? Questions about the long-run consequences of participation, particularly when these involve consequences for a group or community, overlap with the questions relating to the products of social research to which I shall address myself later. My focus at present, however, is not so much on the consequences of the knowledge (in the sense of a social product) that has been generated by the research and that may now be put to some particular social uses, as it is on the consequences of a group's having participated in the research, having revealed certain information, and having in some sense increased their own vulnerability.

Some Illustrative Problems

Some of the ethical concerns that have been voiced about one or another piece of social research have included the point that it represents an invasion of the subject's privacy, an imposition on him, or an exploitation of him; that it deceives the subject about the true nature of the research; or that participation may be harmful to the subject because it disturbs his psychological well-being or because the data may be used somehow to his disadvantage. Let us examine some of these concerns as they apply to research carried out in different settings.

One of the particular settings to which I have addressed myself in some detail (see, e.g., Kelman, 1968, chap. 8) is that of the social-psychological laboratory. My major concern has been with the extensive use of deception in the conduct of laboratory experiments in social psychology (and in certain other areas of psychology as well). Deception is used because many of the phenomena that the psychologist hopes to observe would be destroyed if he revealed the true purpose of the experiment to his subjects. For example, if an experiment were designed to study the conditions under which an individual conforms to the judgments of the majority, knowledge of this fact would so alter the subject's behavior that it would no longer be relevant to the question posed by the experiment. The medical researcher finds himself in a comparable situation when he uses placebos in drug studies: to reveal to a patient that he has been given a placebo would destroy the very reaction for which the placebo is designed to control. In general, however, the situation of the medical scientist is different from that of the behavioral scientist. When he uses deception it is often as a way of assuring readier cooperation on the subject's part. On the other hand, when the behavioral scientist uses deception, it is often integral to the natnre of his study. Without deception, it would be impossible—at least within the limits of our current research technology—to obtain the kind of information that many psychological experiments are designed to produce.

Thus, the experimental social psychologist is confronted with a conflict of values. On the one hand, the use of deception is ethically objectionable. On the other hand, however, certain lines of research cannot be pursued without the use of some deception. For those who value these lines of research because they represent contributions to knowledge—perhaps even to the betterment of the human condition—it is difficult, therefore, to take the absolutist position that a psychologist must refrain from using deception in his experiments under any and all conditions. Even granting the relativist position, however, there remains the question of the extent to which deception is used, the circumstances under which it is used, and the way in which it is used. Before deciding to use deception, an experimenter ought to give very serious consideration to three dimensions: (*a*) the importance of the study, which refers not only to its scientific significance (admittedly a subjective judgment), but also to the stage of research that it represents (e.g., exploratory versus final); (*b*) the availability of alternative (deception-free) methods capable of producing at least comparable information; and (*c*) the noxiousness of the deception, which refers both to the degree of deception involved and to the probability of harmful consequences.[5] These three considerations must be put into the balance before deciding on the use of deception. Only if a study is very important and no alternative methods are available can anything more than the mildest form of deception be justified. In other words, even if deception is not eliminated entirely from the repertory of the social psychologist, it ought to be used only in rare cases and under highly circumscribed conditions. What has concerned deeply some critics of deception, like myself, has been the fact that, by the early 1960s, deception in social-psychological experiments had been routinized and escalated to such an extent that it was used as a matter of course and often took rather elaborate forms. Fortunately, the last few years have seen increasing sensitivity to this problem within the field, as part of a general reexamination of the role of experimental methodology (cf. Miller, 1972).

Deception presents special problems when it is used in an experiment that is stressful, unpleasant, or potentially harmful to the subject, in the sense that it may create self-doubts, lower his self-esteem, reveal some of his weaknesses, or create temporary conflict, frustration, or anxiety. By deceiving the subject about the nature of the experiment, the experimenter deprives him of the freedom to decide whether or not he wants to be exposed to these potentially disturbing experiences. It is, of course, true that whenever people engage in social interaction, they risk the occurrence of such experiences. This fact, however, does not in and of itself justify exposing subjects to these risks—without their explicit knowledge—for purposes of social research. In real-life situations, the person engages in social interactions for his own purposes and he takes whatever risks (such as an unexpected blow to his self-esteem) these interactions entail. Similar risks are taken by his partners in the interaction. By contrast, the experimental situation is one that is constructed by the experimenter for his own purposes and in which the subject participates largely for the benefit of the experimenter and as a service to the larger social good that the research is seen to represent. Moreover, the interaction lacks reciprocity since the experimenter does not expose himself to the same kinds of risks as the subject in the interaction proper (although he does, of course, risk his scientific reputation in every experiment he undertakes). Under the circumstances, it is ethically questionable to ask a subject to participate in an experiment that might expose him to potentially disturbing experiences without informing him of the nature of the risks entailed. Questions arise even if the risks are no greater than those involved in day-to-day social interaction; they become especially serious if the experiment is so structured that a higher than usual degree of stress or self-doubt is generated in the subject.

The use of deception presents ethical problems even when the experiment does not entail potential harm or discomfort for the subject. Deception violates the respect to which all fellow humans are entitled and the trust that is basic to all interpersonal relationships. Such violations are doubly disturbing since they contribute, in this age of mass society, to the already powerful tendencies to manufacture realities and manipulate populations. Furthermore, by undermining the basis of trust in the relationship between investigator and subject, deception makes it increasingly difficult for social scientists to carry out their work in the future. Subjects will be less inclined to cooperate in social research and, even if they do participate, to believe the investigator's definition of the situation and thus to react spontaneously within the terms of that definition. The effects of such "pollution" of the research environment are discussed in a paper by Donald Warwick (1971).

The ethical problems often raised by social research manifest themselves more clearly when the research is carried out in a laboratory setting since the setting is almost entirely under the investigator's control and he, therefore, enjoys (as mentioned earlier) a considerable power advantage over the subject. However, similar problems, with varying degrees of severity, can arise when research is carried out in "natural" settings—that is, when the investigator goes to the subject, rather than having the subject come to him. Warwick's paper

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[5] This analysis was developed by Elizabeth M. Douvan, Erasmus L. Hoch, and myself, while serving on the Psychology Subject Pool Committee at the University of Michigan.

is devoted to a case study of precisely such a piece of research which combined the methods of participant observation and the survey interview. To be sure, that study is atypical and raises more thorny ethical questions than most studies in its genre do, but it does illustrate that the ethical dilemmas of social research are by no means unique to a particular methodology.

Research based on participant observation inevitably raises some concerns about the invasion of subjects' privacy. When the observation is disguised, these concerns become particularly serious and parallel those raised by deception in the laboratory (see Erikson, 1967). A social scientist, for example, who joins an organization in order to make observations, and misinforms or fails to inform the group about the nature of his activities, clearly is invading his subjects' privacy without giving them any choice in the matter. They may be revealing information that they would not have wanted to reveal to an outsider, particularly if they are deliberately keeping their activities or part of their activities secret. Insofar as the observer pretends to be a member, he deprives the group of the opportunity to decide what to reveal or not to reveal to a nonmember.

Some ethical problems, less severe in nature, arise even if the participant observer acknowledges his research interest and is accepted in the group on that basis. The role of the participant observer creates many ambiguities, in that the social scientist is seen as neither a full-fledged member nor a complete outsider. Sometimes, in fact, the observer himself is unclear about his role; he may be a sympathizer or even a genuine member of the organization that he is observing, or he may become committed to it as his research proceeds. In view of these ambiguities, the members of the group may come to accept the observer and act "naturally" in his presence. They may thus reveal information that they might prefer to keep private, not because they are uninformed about the observer's purposes, but because they have learned to ignore him. As a matter of fact, the success of a participant observer can be measured precisely by the extent to which he stays in the background, without intruding in the normal flow of activities, and is ignored by the members of the group. In and of itself, this state of affairs is not objectionable from an ethical point of view. If the observer has explained fully the purposes of his research, then the group members are aware of his interest in observing the normal, spontaneous flow of their activities. Once they have agreed to this arrangement, it is up to them to take the necessary steps if there are certain aspects of their normal activities that they would rather keep private. Ethical problems arise, however, when the observer deliberately takes advantage of the ambiguity of his role to seduce group members to give him information that they might not have revealed otherwise. This would happen, for example, if by implying a greater level of commitment to the organization than he actually felt, he gained access to esoteric knowledge or to the inner circle of organizational decision making. The temptation to take advantage of the ambiguities inherent in his role places a considerable ethical burden on the participant observer.

Research in natural settings that uses unobtrusive measures—that is, in which the investigator makes systematic observations of some aspect of his subjects' behavior without their awareness that these observations are taking place—presents problems similar to those of unacknowledged participant observation. The ethical issues are less severe when the observations focus on naturally occurring events that are essentially public—for example, on behavior in streets, in trains, in restaurants, or in department stores. In these situations, the subject clearly knows that his behavior is observable by outsiders; what he does not know is that some of these outsiders are there specifically for the purpose of making systematic observations of his behavior. Greater ambiguities arise when the social scientist has gained access to observations that are not generally public, or when he has introduced experimental manipulations into the natural situation.

The experimental manipulation of natural settings may take various forms. In one of the oldest studies in this genre, Hartmann (1936) systematically varied the type of appeal used in political leaflets sent out to different segments of the population in the course of an actual election campaign and then compared the effectiveness of these appeals. In other studies, experimenters stage little happenings in public places or make certain requests of passersby or sales clerks, and then observe their reactions; by varying systematically some aspect of the staged event or of the request, they are able to assess the effects of relevant experimental variables. The use of experiments in natural settings has increased greatly in recent years, partly in response to the increasing realization of the limitations of laboratory experiments in social psychology. Some highly ingenious naturalistic experiments have been and are being carried out, for example, in the area of helping behavior (e.g., Bryan & Test, 1967; Latané, 1970; Piliavin, Rodin, & Piliavin, 1969). Campbell (1969) has argued very persuasively for the value of this type of research in "producing a nontrivial social science [p. 370]." Its unique value, however, rests on the fact that the subject is unaware of his participation in an experiment—and this is precisely one of the more disturbing features of this type of research from an ethical point of view. The laboratory experiment, even when it uses deception, at least gives the subject the chance to decide whether or not to participate; the naturalistic experiment, of the type discussed here, deprives him of that choice.

There is, of course, as Campbell pointed out, considerable variation in the severity of the ethical problems raised by different experiments in this genre. On the one hand, we may have a study in which some minor variations are introduced in an ongoing activity, such as a street collection for a charity or a solicitation of signatures on a petition; the variation may consist in the status of the solicitor (his age, his style of dress) or in the presence of a positive or negative model. This type of study presents no serious ethical problems. The deception and intrusion involved are rather mild since "the experimental treatment falls within the range of the respondent's ordinary experience, merely being an experimental rearrangement of normal-level communications [Campbell, 1969, p. 371]." At the other extreme, to take a hypothetical example, we may have a study in which the experimenter's accomplice feigns a heart attack in a public place under varying experimental conditions and an observer notes the amount and type of help that people offer him. Such a procedure, on the basis of a rather massive deception, places the subject in a situation that may constitute a considerable imposition and that may (whether or not he decides to help the victim) be very disturbing to him—without giving him any choice in the matter at all. The fact that such events may occur naturally does not, of course, justify staging them for research purposes. In the long run, the proliferation of such experiments would add to the already considerable degree of deceit and irrationality that pervades modern life. Increasing public awareness that such experiments are taking place would add not only to the "pollution" of the research environment, which I have already mentioned, but also to the ambiguity of real-life situations that call for helping behavior. In some respects, the long-term implications of active deception in naturalistic experiments are even more disquieting than those in laboratory experiments, since the laboratory at least represents a situation that is by definition isolated from the rest of life and in which the subject is aware that certain unusual procedures are likely to be introduced.

Research based on the use of unobtrusive measures and disguised experimental treatments again presents us with a difficult dilemma. It certainly can be argued that, from a methodological point of view, social research is often at its best when the subject is unaware that he is being studied. Such research also may yield knowledge that may be of great social significance—such as knowledge about the conditions under which people will extend or refuse help to those in need. Yet, there are some difficult ethical problems inherent in this type of research. As in other lines of research, the severity of the ethical problems raised by the research must be weighed against its importance and the unavailability of alternative procedures.

Survey research, which generally is carried out in the setting of the respondent's home, is less beset by problems of deception and disguise than some of the other approaches that have been discussed so far. It may, of course, happen that a survey researcher will misrepresent the organization that is conducting the survey or the overall purpose of the survey. Such misrepresentations, however, are in no way inherent in survey methodology and are frowned upon by reputable survey research organizations. On the other hand, the investigator does not necessarily give the respondent complete information about the study. Although the purpose of the interview is often transparent and the questions straightforward, the interviewer may be pursuing certain specific hypotheses that he does not reveal to the respondent, and he deliberately may introduce some questions that are indirect or that have no obvious relationship to the topic of the interview. As long as the interview is not marked by any major hidden agenda, however, the pursuit of such hypotheses and the use of such questions are well within the terms of the contract formed when the respondent agrees to be interviewed.

There are certain other ethical problems that survey research brings into focus. The mere fact that an interviewer arrives at someone's doorstep to ask questions, often without prior arrangement, may represent an imposition and an unacceptable invasion of privacy. It may place the respondent in a position of being induced to reveal information that he might prefer not to reveal. If he does not have any information about a subject on which he is questioned, or if he lacks an opinion on a matter on which he feels that he is expected to have an opinion (and the very fact that he is asked questions on the topic implies such an expectation), then he may feel embarrassed and exposed and he may experience a lowering of his self-esteem. Sometimes he may feel embarrassed and uncomfortable about the opinions that he does have, since he may feel that the interviewer disapproves of them. A well-trained interviewer, of course, does not communicate disapproval and structures the situation so that the respondent will not experience any embarrassment, but the possibility of such reactions still remains. I do not wish to imply that these are, in most cases, profoundly disturbing experiences; in many respects, as Warwick (1971) has pointed out, the experience of being interviewed may in fact be highly rewarding for the respondent. It must be remembered, however, that survey research does represent some invasion of privacy, which is particularly troublesome if the respondent feels a lack of choice about his participation in the interview. From a broader social point of view, there is also the question of the extent to which the proliferation of survey research may add to the already considerable erosion of privacy in our society.

When interviews, questionnaires, or psychological tests are administered to a delimited population—such as the workers in an industrial firm, the students in a high school, or the welfare recipients in a community—then the problem of anonymity takes on special significance. If an individual's responses became known to the factory management, the school administration, or the welfare agency, they might have potentially damaging consequences for him. Under such circumstances, negligence in protecting the respondent's anonymity would constitute a serious ethical violation. In reporting his findings, the investigator must remove not only the names of the respondents, but also any other information that might—given the context of a delimited organization or community—provide clues to his identity. If, in fact, the data collected are to be used not only for purposes of research, but also for some subsequent decisions about individual respondents—for example, decisions relating to their employment status or their admission to an educational program—then the investigator must make it perfectly clear at the outset that the usual guarantees of anonymity do not hold. It would be very dangerous, from the point of view both of the rights of the subject and of the integrity of social research, for an investigator to countenance any ambiguity between research uses and administrative uses of his procedures.

Even when the anonymity of the individual respondent is clearly assured, the research may have potentially damaging consequences for any group whose data are reported separately. For example, findings in a survey conducted in an industrial organization about the distribution of attitudes in different units may provide the basis for a reorganization or some special treatment of one or another of these units; these changes may or may not be desirable from the point of view of the workers involved. These are the types of concerns that have made some members of the black community wary of questionnaires and psychological tests. They are afraid that responses of blacks (e.g., on children's achievement tests) may compare unfavorably with those of whites (because of biased instruments or for other reasons), and that these findings may then be used to their group's disadvantage in the formulation of policy decisions. The basic concern here, actually, is with the product of the research and the social uses to which it is put—issues that I pursue in a later section. For the present purposes, the main point is that members of a minority group may feel that participation in this type of research would increase their vulnerability, and that these feelings often may be justified. Under the circumstances, it is incumbent upon the investigator to conduct and communicate his research in a way that will minimize the vulnerability of the group he studies, and to afford his potential subjects a genuine choice about their participation in the research.

When research in the black or other minority communities is carried out by white investigators, it also raises special questions about the invasion of the group's privacy and exploitation of its resources by outsiders. These concerns, as well as the concern about the danger that information revealed in the course of the research may be damaging to the interests of the community, are very similar to those that have arisen in the context of research in foreign areas. Along with other social scientists, I have been concerned particularly about the implications of research conducted by American or European scholars in developing countries (see Kelman, 1968, chaps. 3 and 4). Some of the problems that arise in this setting have been highlighted by such incidents as Project Camelot (see Horowitz, 1967). In foreign area research, the general concern with invasion of privacy is exacerbated by the fact that the researcher is a foreigner who will report his findings to other foreigners; the subjects easily can feel that they are being treated as specimens to be put on display before a curious audience that may denigrate their way of life because of insufficient understanding of it or sympathy for it. Concern with exploitation arises particularly when investigators from industrialized nations come into less-developed countries to collect data for their own research, often with the help of local resources, and then export these data to advance their own careers abroad without making sure that sufficient benefits accrue to the society providing the data. Finally, there is the concern that research by outsiders in less-developed areas may represent direct or indirect intervention in the affairs of the countries studied, or at least that it may be used, in some fashion, to promote the interests of the more powerful sponsoring country at the expense of the weaker and poorer host country. Project Camelot is a good example of a research program that created resentment and suspicion in Latin America, where many saw it as having been designed for purposes of intelligence and intervention. Although there is no evidence that the project was designed for these purposes, the auspices under which it was organized and the framework within which it was conceived made these suspicions more than reasonable. Much of social research carried out in developing countries has been quite oblivious to these ethical issues, but since the fiasco of Project Camelot they have been discussed widely and considered seriously among social scientists.

My discussion of the many ethical problems engendered by social research in its various settings was not meant to imply that all social research is an ethical morass. I have mentioned various practices and consequences because they can and do occur, not necessarily because they are typical occurrences. Some are fairly widespread, being built into particular research traditions; others are quite rare. In large proportions of social research, the subject's treatment can by no means be described as degrading, overly intrusive, or potentially harmful. In fact, participation in social research often may represent an enriching and personally satisfying experience for the subject. In short, I am not proposing that any of the lines of research that I have discussed ought to be abandoned (although some do deserve serious reexamination, from an ethical as well as a methodological point of view). My purpose is to point out ethical pitfalls that call for our active awareness.

There are various ways of looking at the ethical pitfalls that I have enumerated. In keeping with the conceptual orientation of the present article, I shall look at them as questions about the way in which the social researcher uses his power. Research procedures that involve potential ethical violations correspond to illegitimate uses of the investigator's power. When we say that an investigator has invaded a domain that the subject has the right to keep private, or that he has limited the subject's freedom to decide on his own participation or to protect his own interests, or that he has induced the subject to take actions or reveal information that may be personally damaging to him, or that he has been unresponsive to the norms of the group he has studied, we are in effect suggesting that he may have abused his power—that he may have used it in an arbitrary fashion. The legitimate use of power presupposes adherence to shared norms that govern the relationship between the two parties. The central norm governing the relationship of investigator and subject is that of voluntary informed consent, and ethical problems generally arise because this norm has been violated or circumvented. Voluntary consent is impossible to the extent that the subjects constitute a captive audience or are unaware of the fact that they are being studied. Informed consent is impossible to the extent that subjects' participation is solicited under false pretenses or they are deceived about the true nature of the research. If investigators were to adhere scrupulously to the norm of consent and related principles, then most of the ethical problems would be avoided or corrected for readily. The question is how such adherence can be facilitated.

Some Corrective Approaches

In the discussion of illustrative problems, I have indicated either explicitly or implicitly some of the directions that solutions might take. It is quite clear that most of the problems indeed could be resolved or at least minimized with strict adherence to the norm of voluntary informed consent. When subjects have given their full consent, invasion of privacy is no longer a major ethical issue, since "consent to participate actually constitutes consent to relinquish certain areas of privacy that might otherwise have been enjoyed and protected [Parsons, 1969, p. 352]." Subjecting a subject to an uncomfortable or disturbing experience, even if it entails some risk of longer term consequences, is ethically acceptable if the subject has freely agreed to participate in full knowledge of the risks involved. Even experimental deception becomes ethically unobjectionable if the subject has agreed to participate in full knowledge that he may be given some false or incomplete information in the course of an experiment (see Campbell, 1969, p. 370; Mead, 1969, p. 371).

Commitment to the principle of voluntary informed consent, however, cannot by itself resolve the major ethical issues, since a great deal depends on the degree to which and the manner in which the principle is implemented. Implementation of the principle is by no means straightforward; there is no simple, universally acceptable set of rules that can be followed. Total adherence to the principle is impossible if any research is to take place at all. For one thing, many kinds of research—such as research with small children, or research using unobtrusive measures—would have to be ruled out entirely, unless the principle is adjusted to special circumstances. Even if we were prepared to rule out all such research, a literal adherence to the principle would be physically impossible (see Parsons, 1969). The investigator cannot give the subject the precise reason for every question he asks and every procedure he uses, nor can he remove from his sample all those who conceivably might be participating out of some sense of obligation. Thus, the operational meaning of voluntary informed consent must remain in an area of judgment. In implementing the principle, some decision has to be made about what constitutes, under varying circumstances, consent that is sufficiently voluntary and sufficiently informed. Furthermore, implementation usually involves some translation of the principle into a specific procedure, such as the signing of a consent form. Any such procedure easily can become routinized and ritualized, thus pushing the ethical issue just one step further back. That is, it is quite possible for subjects to be deprived of the opportunity for voluntary informed consent to the act of signing the consent forms, as has indeed happened in certain areas of medical research (see, e.g., Lear, 1966).

Since implementing the principle of voluntary informed consent requires subjective judgments and is open to the possibility of routinized tokenism, we clearly need more than a set of formal procedures to insure genuine consent. The atmosphere and structure of the investigator–subject interaction must be such that the subject has both the opportunity and the capacity to make meaningful choices. It is in this context that my earlier remarks about the power relationship between investigator and subject become particularly germane. The subject's relative power deficiency makes it difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve a genuinely voluntary informed consent. Power deficiencies deriving from the subject's position in the society or organization tend to militate against *voluntary* consent. Members of low-status or dependent groups are limited (or at least feel limited) in their ability to withhold consent, both at the point of recruitment as subjects and at other choice points throughout the research. Quite often, they do not feel free to refuse participation, to abstain from procedures that they find distasteful, or to withdraw from the study once it is underway. In short, they are less able to mount countervailing power against that of the investigator and thus have less control over their participation and experiences as subjects. Power deficiencies deriving from the subject's position within the research situation proper tend to militate against *informed* consent. Since the research situation is constructed by the investigator and defined in his terms, the subject must depend on him for the information he needs in deciding about his own participation and continuation in the study. His information thus tends to be limited, particularly if he is deceived about the nature of the experiment or kept in the dark about certain features of the situation.

To create the structural conditions for more truly voluntary informed consent, we need collective efforts and institutional mechanisms that will help to overcome *the subject's power deficiency* by increasing his participation in the research and, most importantly, by providing him with countervailing power in his relationship to the investigator. The need is not just for greater sensitivity and goodwill on the part of the investigator (though these too are essential), but for institutionalized patterns that would define the rights and obligations vested in the role of both investigator and subject. Such patterns would be designed to assure that the norm of voluntary informed consent is adhered to as fully and as scrupulously as possible; and, to the extent that other necessities dictate certain adjustments in adherence to this norm, that such adjustments are kept within the limits of legitimacy. I mention here some of the forms that such institutionalized mechanisms might take in four categories: patterns of research, patterns of training, mechanisms of protection, and mechanisms of accountability.

Patterns of research. A major barrier to correcting ethically questionable procedures in social research is the fact that some of these procedures have become institutionalized. For example, the use of deception has been a standard feature of social-psychological experiments for some time; deception experiments have served as the basis for many PhD theses and many journal articles; in fact, some major research traditions are built almost entirely on this procedure. Under these circumstances, even an investigator who has become sensitive to the ethical implications of the procedures he uses and concerned about them finds it difficult to abandon them entirely. He may try to correct for them—as many social psychologists have done, for example, by giving careful attention to the postexperimental feedback, in which they explain to the subjects the nature of the deception and the reasons for its use—but such corrections, though valuable, are designed to retain rather than to abandon the basic procedure. No scientist will give up readily a procedure that has been successful in producing results (both in terms of scientific knowledge and in terms of career advancement). Change does take place, however, within a community of scientists if new procedures are developed and prove to be at least as effective in producing results as the old procedures.

One major corrective approach, then, to the ethical ambiguities of social research is the active development and the institutionalization of alternative research models that call for an ethically sounder relationship between investigator and subject. The models I have in mind can be characterized as *participatory research*, in that they are designed to involve the subject as an active participant in a joint effort with the investigator. The procedures would depend on the subject's positive motivations to contribute to the research enterprise—because he has been persuaded of the importance of the research, or because he finds the procedures intrinsically rewarding, or because he feels that he has a unique contribution to make, or because he has a special stake in the outcome of the investigation. Unlike many of the procedures that are now in common use, participatory research would "call for increasing the sophistication of potential subjects, rather than maintaining their naïveté [Kelman, 1968, p. 225]." Participatory research does not necessarily imply complete equality between investigator and subject. For example, the investigator—because of his greater expertise and because of the nature of his interest in the enterprise—would usually play a more central role in designing the research and in defining the tasks to be performed by the subject. Though the roles of the two parties are bound to be different, the relationship between them would be one of genuine partnership; the subject, along with the investigator, would be interested personally in the process or outcome of the research and involved actively in making it a success. This kind of model would go a long way toward removing the power discrepancies between investigator and subject.

Research models of the type I am proposing are by no means new; many of the procedures used by various groups of social scientists clearly meet the criteria of participatory research. What I am proposing is that these procedures be extended to wider areas of social research and that they be *more fully developed and institutionalized.* In experimental social psychology, the search for more participatory research approaches might take the form of further exploration and development of procedures based on some form of role playing (Kelman, 1968, pp. 223–225). In role-playing experiments, observations and data are provided by the subject's performance in what he knows to be a make-believe situation. Subjects can become highly involved in a role-playing experience, both because the laboratory situation may be inherently engrossing and because their interest in actively contributing to the research may have been mobilized. Role-playing experiments may take various forms. Perhaps the simplest form is one that replicates a standard laboratory experiment, except that the subject is told ahead of time that the experimental manipulations are make believe; in other words, the subject is asked to play the role of a subject in a deception experiment.[6] A form of role playing that may on occasion be very elaborate and complex involves laboratory simulation, in which subjects are asked to take roles in a laboratory model of some aspect of the real world (e.g., the roles of political decision makers in the international system); here the subject is asked to play a real-life role, rather than merely the role of a subject. Another variant of role playing makes use of structured game situations, which (like "Monopoly" or other parlor games) can be highly involving, even though the participant knows that "it is only a game." I do not believe that all of the phenomena with which experimental social psychologists have been concerned can suitably be studied through role-playing techniques; I do believe, however, that the potential uses of these techniques are greater than we have realized so far. There is a need to explore the circumstances under which role-playing techniques would be suitable—or more precisely, the specific purposes to which different types of role playing can be applied.

In survey research, it is commonly assumed that "elite interviews"—that is, interviews with political leaders, business leaders, or other high-status personages—require a somewhat different orientation than ordinary interviews. Usually, in structuring such an interview, the interviewer makes it clear to the respondent that he regards him as an expert who can make a unique contribution to the research enterprise by drawing on his special knowledge and experience. The respondent thus becomes an active partner in the research, who gains satisfaction from the utilization of his expertise and the knowledge that he is making a unique contribution. This kind of orientation is characteristic of the interviews conducted by anthropologists with informants in the field (see Mead, 1969). One way of moving in the direction of more participatory research would be to extend this model to all survey interviews—to treat all respondents as elite respondents. To be sure, the respondent in a sample survey is not selected because of his expertise, but he does have special knowledge and experience to bring to the interview. The interview is concerned with his personal opinions, beliefs, and experiences—matters on which he clearly has unique information to contribute. When the interview is oriented toward these special contributions, it becomes more of a partnership in a joint enterprise for the two participants.

Community and organizational studies may take the form of action research, in which social research and an action program are linked directly to one another. In such research, the investigator works with groups that are concerned with improving their functioning or have decided to introduce a program of change. The research is governed by the requirements of the action program and is related integrally to it. Action research projects may differ in the extent to which the responsibility for the design and execution of the research is in the hands of the participants, and in the extent to which the research is an actual component of the action program or an activity parallel to it. In either case, however, the research grows out of the needs of the community or organization studied and is designed to facilitate the goals of the members. Clearly, this model is not applicable to all community or organizational studies, but to the extent to which it can be used, the research would take on a truly participatory character.

None of these examples of participatory research provides a completely satisfactory solution to the ethical dilemmas that have been raised. From a methodological point of view, there are some significant problems that probably cannot be investigated with participatory techniques. Clearly, these

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[6] Some critics of role-playing experiments (e.g., Freedman, 1969) have equated all role playing with this particular subtype of role playing. I tend to agree that this type of role playing is fairly limited in its usefulness, although I feel that for certain purposes it may be quite valuable and—depending on the particular procedures used—it may produce "real" behavior, not merely (as Freedman claims) "people's guesses as to how they would behave if they were in a particular situation." Beyond that, however, Freedman ignores all of the other forms of role-playing procedures which can generate levels of realism, spontaneity, and involvement far greater than those obtained in the traditional deception experiment.

techniques are not suited for the study of phenomena that tend to disappear once a person is aware of being observed. Even from an ethical point of view, participatory research is not entirely free of ambiguities. It is possible that these techniques too may become routinized and ritualized, thus creating the impression of participation without genuinely involving the subject in the research process. Nevertheless, the further development and institutionalization of participatory models of social research would provide some meaningful alternatives for those social scientists who are concerned about the unequal relationship between investigator and subject.

Patterns of training. One of the ways of institutionalizing concern for the rights of their subjects among social scientists is to build it into the definition of their professional role—which in turn means making it an integral component of professional training. Certain ethical concerns—such as respect for confidentiality of subjects' responses—have traditionally been important parts of the normative structure of social research. Other issues, however, have tended to be ignored in the course of professional training; in fact, to become a fully trained social researcher a student often has had to learn to overcome whatever compunctions he might have had about deceiving his subjects or invading their privacy. It is not that social researchers as human beings have been concerned any less with these issues than anyone else; often, however, they have not been concerned with them *as social scientists.* To correct for some of the ethical problems arising in social research, norms for the treatment of subjects must become a central part of the operational code of social scientists, alongside of norms for proper methodology or honest reporting.

Concern with the rights of the subject will become part of the social researcher's operational code if he is sensitized to the issues in the course of his training and if this sensitivity is reinforced throughout his professional career—as is true, for example, in the case of methodological issues. The institutionalization of ethical review procedures helps to increase such sensitivity. The development of ethical codes is also useful, not simply from the point of view of setting and enforcing norms, but from the point of view of providing needed educational materials. Social science associations are now giving attention increasingly to the development or extension of such codes. The American Psychological Association, for example, has had an ethical code for some time, but it has focused more heavily on the psychologist's relationship to clients in a professional context than on his relationship to subjects in a research context. Recently, an ad hoc Committee on Ethical Standards in Psychological Research was established by the APA with the explicit mission of exploring in detail the ethical issues in research with human subjects. The Committee's proposals have stimulated a lively debate within the profession. Its work is not yet completed, but has already led to greater specification of ethical standards governing the investigator–subject relationship and generated useful inputs to the training process (see Cook, Hicks, Kimble, McGuire, Schoggen, & Smith, 1972).

Mechanisms of protection. To counteract the subject's power deficiency, there is a need for further development of institutionalized mechanisms designed to protect the subject's interests. One such mechanism is the establishment of committees to review research proposals from the point of view of their implications for the rights of the subject. Such committees have been set up by now in most universities and research institutes, in compliance with regulations issued by the United States Public Health Service requiring a special intrainstitutional review of all proposals submitted to that agency in which human subjects are used. The review is designed to assure that the subject's welfare is safeguarded adequately and that appropriate steps are taken to obtain his consent. Such a committee is useful to the extent that it is taken seriously, as an opportunity to correct for existing power imbalances; insofar as the committee is viewed primarily as a way of complying with regulations of the sponsoring agency, there is a danger that the review process may become routinized. Even when the committee is taken seriously, its composition may make a considerable difference. If it consists entirely of individuals in the same field as the proposal under review, there may be a great reluctance to turn down any proposal, both because of considerations of colleagueship and because the researcher and the reviewers would tend to be tied into the same set of ideas about standard, accepted procedures in the field. It is very important, therefore, for review committees to include at least some members who come from different disciplines and thus bring different biases and perspectives to bear on the choice of research procedures. There may be some advantage, in fact, in having on the committee some individuals who are not members of the institution and who can serve as representatives of "the public." On the other hand, there is a danger that a committee that is too far removed from the research under consideration may—in its eagerness to protect the rights of the subject—interfere with the rights of the investigator to the free pursuit of his research. Clearly, review committees must be so structured and composed that the rights of both parties will be given serious and respectful consideration.

Another mechanism of protection is provided through the codes of ethics that have been adopted now by the various professional associations in the social sciences. These codes serve to protect the rights of subjects by defining the obligations of investigators and setting limits on what they may do in their relationship to their subjects. In the formulation and revision of such codes, it would be important to have the subjects' point of view represented. There may be some advantage, in fact, in complementing such codes with a document written explicitly from the point of view of the subject—a "subjects' bill of rights." Such a document might spell out in detail the appropriate ways of obtaining consent under various circumstances. There are two rights that are central and that any such document would have to feature: the right to refuse participation in a study, and the right to withdraw from it. If these rights are observed scrupulously, then many other problems will take care of themselves since investigators clearly would have to persuade their subjects to participate and continue in the research.

The question of what kind of group might compose a "subjects' bill of rights" brings to mind the idea of a subjects' union that some observers have suggested. I find it difficult to conceive of a general union of subjects since so much of social research is carried out with specific groups, investigated on a one-time basis; in other words, it does not involve a specifiable population from which investigators repeatedly draw their subjects. The formation of a subjects' union is quite feasible, however, in special settings—such as a university campus or a research hospital—in which investigators regularly draw on a segment of the population to obtain subjects for their research. For example, many psychology departments have instituted some form of subject pool (see King, 1970); a subjects' union might be a very appropriate agency to represent the interests of subjects in negotiations with the managers of such a pool.

Mechanisms of accountability. A crucial condition for the legitimate use of the investigator's power is the availability of some recourse to the subject if he feels that his rights have been violated. There have to be some mechanisms for holding the investigator accountable when he oversteps the limits of his authority in dealings with his subjects. The legal system provides such mechanisms in extreme cases. Many of the violations of subjects' rights, however, do not fall clearly within the terms of existing laws; also, the recourse to legal procedures is so cumbersome and expensive that subjects generally would be reluctant to use it. Another mechanism of accountability is provided by the ethics committees of professional associations, which can act on a complaint submitted by a subject who feels that a member of the association has violated the association's own ethical code. Though ethics committees, such as that of the American Psychological Association, have dealt in the past mostly with complaints growing out of the professional–client relationship, there is no reason why they cannot deal with complaints growing out of the investigator–subject relationship, particularly as ethical codes are developed to give more specific attention to this relationship.

The mechanism of the ethics committee raises one serious question: Does an investigator's accountability to a group consisting entirely of colleagues within his own profession provide enough countervailing power to the subject who feels that his rights have been violated? Is there perhaps some need for external controls, at least to supplement the intraprofessional ones? For a variety of reasons, I believe that governmental regulatory commissions are not the answer; I am afraid that they might greatly inhibit freedom of research without really providing effective recourse for individual subjects. On the other hand—as in the case of the research review committee—I feel that there is a real need to bring some outside perspectives to bear on evaluation of the investigator's activities. It is essential, however, that this be done in a context in which freedom of research is respected as a basic social value. One possibility would be to consider broadening the perspective of the professional ethics committees by including on them, as members or as consultants, some representatives of outside points of view. Another mechanism that I see as a potentially very valuable supplement to the professional ethics committee would be the appointment of an ombudsman, who would receive complaints from subjects and represent their interests in dealings with individual investigators, research institutions, or professional associations. Such an ombudsman might function within any large research institution or within a professional association. It is my hope that such intraprofessional mechanisms of accountability, designed to strengthen the subject's countervailing power, will be explored more fully before we move in the direction of greater external controls.

ETHICAL PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE PRODUCTS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

If knowledge is power, then the knowledge produced by social research is, to a large extent, power to control and manipulate human behavior. The production of such knowledge creates difficult ethical dilemmas for the social scientist, particularly when he considers who is likely to use the power to manipulate, over whom, and to what ends. I have discussed some of these general ethical issues elsewhere (Kelman, 1968, chap. 1). For the present purposes, I shall focus more narrowly on the implications of the knowledge produced by social research for the *differential* control of some segments of the population over others—an issue that touches directly on our concern with the rights of the subject.

In general, it can be said that those who produce social research—both the research sponsors and the investigators—are in a position to gain some relative advantage from it. They have the opportunity to define the problem to which the research will be addressed and thus to make it relevant to their particular interests; they also have the capacity and the resources to make use of the research findings. On the other hand, those who supply the data may very well place themselves in a more disadvantageous position. Whatever information they make available about themselves conceivably can be used to control their subsequent behavior. If all segments of a society participated equally as both researchers and subjects, then the relative advantages and disadvantages brought about by these two roles would, in the long run, balance themselves out. Since these roles are not distributed evenly within our society, however—since the less powerful segments of the society provide a disproportionately large number of the subjects and a disproportionately small number of the producers and users of social research—there is a real possibility that social research may serve to strengthen the established segments of the society at the expense of the disadvantaged. Such a possibility raises some difficult questions about the rights of the subject, since his participation in the research may have some damaging consequences for his group.

Considerations of this sort underlie many of the criticisms of social research—or of certain lines of social research—that are being voiced increasingly by activists in the black, the poor, and the student communities. They resent the fact that they are being used as subjects, complaining that "by focusing research attention on them, social scientists are placing them in a position where they can be more readily controlled and manipulated in the interests of the established powers [Kelman, 1970a, p. 97]." I do not feel that there is anything inherent in the nature of social science that works to the disadvantage of the powerless, or that the overall impact of social research has been in that direction. On the contrary, social research is potentially a powerful tool for social change and has in fact made important contributions to that end. Nevertheless, as long as the power relationship between the investigator and the subject remains as imbalanced as it has tended to be, there is a real possibility that social research may further increase the disadvantage of those who are already disadvantaged. I shall mention some illustrative problems and indicate what, in my view, they do and do not imply about the overall impact of social research, before turning to a discussion of some corrective approaches.

Some Illustrative Problems

Perhaps the clearest example of the use of social research by the powerful for the direct manipulation of the powerless is provided by some of the counterinsurgency activities carried on by the United States military and other agencies in developing countries. Project Camelot (see Horowitz, 1967), which has already been mentioned, is by now a classic example of such research, even though it was discontinued before any data actually had been gathered. It is important to recall that Project Camelot was not an operational research program designed to help the United States Army carry out counterinsurgency missions in Latin America; rather, it was designed as unclassified, basic research on the causes and prevention of internal conflict in developing nations. Since the research was sponsored by the Army, however, and since its theoretical questions were formulated within the Army's counterinsurgency framework, there is reason to believe that—whatever the theoretical interests of the investigators may have been—the findings would have been most directly relevant to the Army's counterinsurgency mission. A recent article by Wolf and Jorgensen (1970) provides apparently more blatant examples of the involvement of American social scientists in counterinsurgency programs in Thailand. According to the authors, "these programs comprise efforts at the manipulation of people on a giant scale and intertwine straightforward anthropological research with overt and covert counter-insurgency activities [p. 26]." In sponsoring such programs, the United States government "is less interested in the economic, social, or political causes of discontent than in techniques of neutralizing individual or collective protest [p. 34]." Wolf and Jorgensen cite one research proposal that is designed specifically to help in the development of such techniques. They also describe a "Tribal Data Center," whose purpose is to bring together and process data on tribal villages and their residents and, from all indications, to make these available for counterinsurgency uses. Such data, it seems, are being provided by social scientists, including anthropologists engaged in legitimate ethnographic studies, who may or may not be aware of the uses to which these data may be put. Some of the data requested by the Tribal Data Center, it should be noted, are of a kind that anthropologists traditionally have kept confidential. The information available on these activities is still very sketchy, but they serve to illustrate the possible ways in which data provided by relatively powerless groups may be used to their disadvantage.

The examples from counterinsurgency illustrate the possibility of social research conducted in a way or under conditions that make its products very directly applicable to the control and manipulation of disadvantaged populations, either because the explicit purpose of the research is to provide such information or because the sponsorship of the research makes such application almost inevitable regardless of the purposes of the investigator. There are other kinds of research that do not have this direct link to manipulative activities but whose products could well lend themselves to such purposes. Research on deviant behavior, though it may be completely independent from the operations of any mission-oriented agencies, often is carried out from the perspective of control or prevention of social deviance. As I mentioned earlier, this tendency may reflect the concerns of agencies sponsoring such research, or the concerns of the social scientists themselves. In any event, it influences the kinds of questions to which the research addresses itself and hence the kinds of data that the research produces. For example,

> much of this research focuses on the deviant behavior itself and on the characteristics of the individuals and groups that manifest it and the families and neighborhoods in which it is prevalent, rather than on the systemic processes out of which it emerges [Kelman, 1970b, p. 82].

It thus "points more readily to ways of controlling or at best preventing deviant behavior than it does to ways of restructuring the social realities that are indexed by this behavior [p. 83]."

The data produced by such research could be used directly for purposes of control. This can be seen most clearly in connection with political deviants, such as college protesters or ghetto rioters. Some critics have pointed out, for example, that information on the social and psychological characteristics of protesters might be used by college administrations for the purpose of weeding out protest-prone students at the point of admission. Or, information on the involvement of various segments of a ghetto population in riots could be used to break up all groups that potentially might serve as the focal points for a future riot. The control and prevention of riots and destructive forms of social deviance are legitimate social goals, but I am speaking here of attempts to prevent such activities by repressing those who potentially might engage in them—in other words, to prevent the manifestations of violent protest rather than its causes. Such attempts can only increase the disadvantage of the powerless by blocking their efforts to change the conditions of their lives. There are, of course, studies of student protesters (e.g., Flacks, 1967) and of black militants (e.g., Tomlinson, 1970) that are oriented toward social change rather than social control. Even the findings of such studies conceivably could be used for repressive purposes. However, if one goes beyond the possible use of isolated findings, it stands to reason that the products of a research program taking the problem of control of deviance—or more particularly of protest—as its point of departure are more likely in the long run to be used to the disadvantage of the powerless.

This type of research may not only lend itself to direct use in controlling disadvantaged populations but also may have indirect consequences detrimental to the interests of such populations. By focusing on the carriers of deviant behavior (who are drawn most often from the ranks of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the minority groups) such research may reinforce

> the widespread tendency to explain such behavior more often in terms of the pathology of the deviant individuals, families, and communities, than in terms of such properties of the larger social system as the distribution of power, resources, and opportunities [Kelman, 1970b, p. 83].

Ryan (1971) recently has discussed this tendency as part of a wider ideology of "blaming the victim," which social scientists have helped to perpetuate. The policies suggested by research within this framework "are invariably conceived to revamp and revise the victim, never to change the surrounding circumstances [Ryan, 1971, p. 24]." Ryan points out that such policies are clearly in the interest of the established segments of the population in that they support the status quo. They are against the interests of the disadvantaged in two respects: they make him the target of various intrusive efforts "to change his attitudes, alter his values, fill up his cultural deficits, energize his apathetic soul, cure his character defects, train him and polish him and woo him from his savage ways [p. 24]"; and they divert attention from more promising approaches to overcoming his disadvantage. These issues were at the heart of the debate that was generated by the Moynihan Report on the Negro family (see Rainwater & Yancey, 1967), which emphasized the deterioration of the Negro family as the major obstacle in Negroes' ability to achieve equality. Critics of the report—who included many social scientists—argued that its conclusions about the increasing pathology of the black family were not justified by the evidence and seemed to imply that the weakness of the black family (to whatever extent it does exist) is the cause rather than the effect of blacks' disadvantaged position within the society. They felt that the report could have the consequence (probably unintended) of encouraging national policies that concentrate on efforts to strengthen the black family rather than efforts to provide jobs for black men, to eliminate barriers to economic opportunity, and to correct for inequalities in the distribution of resources.

The debate about the alleged pathology of the black family raises a more general question, going beyond research that focuses on deviant behavior. Some recent critics of social research with black subjects—particularly when it is carried out by white investigators—have taken the position that any research yielding data on the psychological or social characteristics of blacks, which can then be compared with data on whites, is likely to have damaging consequences for the black community. This position was developed, at least in large part, in reaction to Jensen's (1969) lengthy article, which tried to argue that the lower average IQ scores obtained by blacks as compared to whites in many studies reflect genetic differences between the two groups. Jensen's views are by no means widely accepted by his colleagues, and his article generated a large number of critical replies, challenging his interpretations of the evidence. Nevertheless, the article received a considerable amount of publicity, and it probably provided some scientific legitimation for those whites who find it convenient to believe in the intellectual inferiority of blacks.

Now, it can be argued that any black-white comparisons lend themselves to this or other kinds of use detrimental to the black community. Whether the comparison involves ability and achievement scores, or social attitudes, or life styles, it may well put blacks in a negative light—at least from the point of view of the white middle class. Often, the observed differences between blacks and whites may be spurious, being based on biased measures or indicators. For example, black children may perform more poorly on an aptitude test, not because they have less of the aptitude being measured, but because the test is more geared to the experiences of white middle-class children than to those of black ghetto children; the proportion of illegitimate births may be larger in the black community, not because there is a higher proportion of births out of wedlock among black women, but because there is a higher rate of reporting such births. If the observed differences are valid, their interpretation and evaluation may be subject to various biases. For example, differences in IQ may be interpreted (sometimes by psychologists themselves, and more often by nonspecialists) as reflecting innate differences in intelligence, even though such a conclusion is unwarranted by the data; differences in patterns of social behavior and attitudes may be taken as evidence of the immorality or disorganization of the black community because they are evaluated in terms of the white middle-class experience rather than the black ghetto experience. The unfavorable image of blacks presented by the research findings, though based on biases in measurement, interpretation, or evaluation, would become a "scientifically confirmed" reality. As such, it might reinforce negative stereotypes of blacks that already are held by the white population. It might further support negative expectations (often shared by blacks themselves) with respect to the performance of blacks, thus helping to produce a self-fulfilling prophecy. Finally, it might serve as a basis for policies that are irrelevant or detrimental to the interests of blacks, because they are derived from wrong assumptions about the capacities and needs of the black population.

The last set of problems has potentially very far-reaching implications since it suggests that any study in which the psychological or social characteristics of a minority or disadvantaged group are assessed—no matter who carries it out, under what auspices, and within what frame of reference—may have damaging consequences for the groups studied. These consequences may derive from biases that enter in at the point of assessing the characteristics under study, at the point of interpreting the data, or at the point of applying the findings to the formulation or execution of policy. Certainly, similar biases have operated in the development and use of various tests, which have helped to set severe limits on the educational and occupational opportunities of blacks in American society. The possibility that such biases may operate in social research that yields comparisons between blacks or other minority groups and the majority population, and that these comparisons will be used to the disadvantage of the minorities, is very real indeed. The question is, How probable are such negative consequences? By contrast, what is the probability that the findings of the research may be used or usable in ways that would accrue to the advantage of the group under study? And, furthermore, what mechanisms are available and what steps have been taken to counteract the possibility of biased measures and the misinterpretation and misuse of the research findings? These are the kinds of questions that a social scientist must ask himself in each case before deciding to proceed with—or to abandon—a piece of research in a disadvantaged community.

There are those who argue that the various problems I have been discussing in this section are inherent in social research. In the most extreme view, the practitioners of social research are tools of the establishment, and the research is designed to maintain the power and the advantage of the establishment at the expense of the powerless and disadvantaged populations. The products of research, therefore, inevitably are used for purposes of control—for oppression of minorities and third-world peoples, and for repression of protesters and insurgents. On the basis of this analysis, some critics indict social research in general; others indict entire lines of research—such as research on minority groups or research in developing countries. Though the extreme position may not have many proponents, variants of it are heard often enough, even among social scientists, to require some comment. I particularly feel the need to comment because I share a good part of the analysis on which this position is based, but I reject its conclusions as unfounded and ultimately self-defeating.

The wholesale indictment of social research or of entire areas within it is based on too undifferentiated a view of the establishment, of social scientists, and of the relationship between the two. To begin with, the notion that social scientists as a group are part of a vast conspiracy to manipulate oppressed populations in the interest of those in power is inconsistent with the facts, and an analysis that leans heavily on this notion is bound to be unproductive. The problem is far more complex and in some respects more serious since it is linked to systemic forces rather than to the machinations of evil men. To be sure, there are social scientists who are involved in deliberate manipulative activities—such as the counterinsurgency programs mentioned above—for various reasons and with varying degrees of awareness of the type of enterprise to which they are parties. No doubt, there are more social scientists involved in such activities than is commonly known, since by their very nature these activities are usually clandestine; and there is a danger that such involvements may increase if certain current trends in American society become even more pervasive. Such involvements, however, are by no means the norm among social scientists; in some fundamental respects, they go against the norms of the social science community, particularly if they involve secrecy, misrepresentation, and violations of confidentiality. Indeed, the major criticisms of such activities have come from within the social science community itself (see Horowitz, 1967; Wolf & Jorgensen, 1970).

The more sophisticated form of the indictment of social research is based on the notion that social scientists—both because they are beholden to the establishment agencies that sponsor their research and because of their own class positions—are bound to serve the interests of the elites. Therefore, whether or not they are engaged deliberately in manipulative and oppressive activities—and, in fact, even when they are oriented toward helping the poor and the powerless—the products of their research inevitably contribute to the disadvantage of these groups. This analysis, in my view, has a great deal of merit, but it remains too undifferentiated. First of all, the agencies that sponsor research—both governmental and private—cannot be described as monolithic service stations of the status quo. To be sure, they are usually not wellsprings of political revolution, but they have often (if not often enough) provided stimulation for or at least been responsive to research promotive of social change. A realistic view of our social system must recognize that creative and unconventional ideas do, at least on occasion, emerge from the interstices of the establishment. As far as social researchers themselves are concerned, generally they have not been integrated that well in the society's power structure. As highly educated professionals, they are, clearly, not among the most deprived segments of the population. Yet, they are often marginal in terms of their own social class background; and they are heirs to a strong tradition of social criticism, of concern with social change (at least of a reformist variety), of identification with the underdog, of pushing the establishment and exposing its hypocrisies. Any analysis that ignores this historical tradition cannot give a valid account of the actual and potential role of social research in the promotion of social change.

The strength of this antiestablishment tradition within social science leads me to my second reason for rejecting the notion that social research is inherently a tool of the establishment. In an important sense, just the opposite is true: The questioning of the status quo, of the assumptions on which existing social institutions and policies are based, is at the very heart of the analysis in which the social scientist engages and is inherent in his methodology. Social science, by its nature, is designed to bring independent analytic perspectives to bear on questions of social policy and to provide systematic bases for assessing the consequences of existing arrangements and deriving alternative policy approaches. To be sure, social research does not always perform this function effectively; the social scientist cannot free himself entirely from the dominant perspectives in his society and he is subject to various forms of cooptation. At its best, however, social research is an essential source of alternative perspectives and thus a potentially valuable tool in any effort to promote social change.

Social research has in fact made important contributions to social change and produced findings that strengthen the position of the disadvantaged and powerless groups. One of its major contributions has been in discrediting some of the commonly held myths that have provided support for white racism. Thus, while it is true that psychological data have on occasion been used in support of the notion of genetically based racial differences in intelligence, it should not be forgotten that it is the work of psychologists and anthropologists over a number of years that systematically has refuted this popular notion and made it scientifically unrespectable. Similarly, it is the work of sociologists and social psychologists that has refuted the popular tendency to attribute the disadvantage of blacks in America to some failing in their own character or social organization, by identifying the patterns of exclusion and oppression that are built into the institutions and attitudes of white America. To take another example, research on student protests and ghetto riots—even when it has focused on the characteristics of the participants—has helped to discredit the myths that student protesters are neurotics and that ghetto rioters are riffraff, thus making it necessary to look more carefully at the underlying causes of these actions.

All in all, then, I cannot accept the position that social research is inherently a tool of the establishment, nor do I feel that, on the whole, it has played that kind of role. Quite to the contrary, it would be self-defeating for those of us who identify with the powerless populations to reject or undermine social research, given its actual and potential contributions to the process of social change. At the same time, however, I feel that there is a very real and structural basis for the fear that some of the products of social research may be relatively disadvantageous for the powerless groups, given the power imbalance between those who sponsor and conduct the research and those who provide the data. Such disadvantages do not result necessarily from a deliberate attempt to control or suppress these groups, but from the normal processes that operate in the production and utilization of the research:

1. Those who sponsor and conduct the research are in a position to define what is problematic—to decide on the questions to be asked and the framework within which the answers are to be organized. They thus determine the range of answers that will be obtained and the uses to which the knowledge potentially can be put. Given the imbalance in who sponsors and conducts the research, there is a strong structural possibility that the knowledge produced will be more responsive to the problems seen by the more advantaged segments of the society than to those of the disadvantaged segments. Unless deliberate efforts are made to bring the perspectives of the disadvantaged groups to bear on the problem-setting process, the research is likely to be at best irrelevant and at worst detrimental to the interests of these groups.

2. Even if we assume that the knowledge produced by social research has potentially equal relevance to all segments of the population (despite their unequal opportunities to define the problems for research), the disadvantaged groups have less-ready access to that knowledge. They are less likely to have the financial and technical resources and the trained personnel that are needed to make use of the findings. Moreover, insofar as the research has not been informed by their perspectives, the findings are less likely to be in a form in which they readily can apply them to their purposes.

These structural inequalities have not been as detrimental to the disadvantaged groups as they might have been because, as I have argued, the sponsors and practitioners of social research have not been monolithically oriented to the interests of the establishment, and because the perspectives and interests of the disadvantaged groups have at least indirectly informed the production and utilization of research data. On the other hand, the probability that social research will work to the disadvantage of the powerless may well increase as the potential usefulness of social research becomes more apparent to those in power, unless we develop more effective mechanisms of correcting for the current power imbalance. Let me turn then, briefly, to an examination of some corrective approaches.

Some Corrective Approaches

There are occasions when a piece of social research may damage so clearly the interests of the groups studied and violate their rights that it ought to be stopped. We do need to develop and extend mechanisms that will protect subjects against such abuses, without imposing political controls on the freedom of research. There are also occasions when an investigator may decide to refrain voluntarily from a particular line of research because he feels the probability that its products will be put to negative uses is too high. Such assessments must be left to the individual investigator. The most important corrective approaches, however, are not those designed to stop a particular line of research, but those designed to balance it—to make sure that all segments of the population have an opportunity to bring their perspectives to bear on the formulation of the problems, and to safeguard their interests in the interpretation and utilization of the results. At the level of the individual project, this means institutionalizing ways of involving representatives of the group under study both in the conduct of the research and in the utilization of the findings. At the level of research policy and the organization of research within the society, it means institutionalizing ways of diversifying the community of producers and users of social research. Such diversification would counteract the power imbalance by focusing on the research that is done rather than on the research that is prevented.

I examine here some of the institutionalized ways of correcting the current power imbalance in terms of mechanisms of accountability, patterns of research sponsorship, patterns of research participation, and patterns of research utilization.

Mechanisms of accountability. Counterinsurgency research and its possible extensions to the domestic American scene underline the need for mechanisms to protect the groups under study against possible abuses. Mechanisms that might serve this purpose are basically similar to the mechanisms of protection and accountability that I discussed in connection with the *processes* of social research, since the ethical issues involved are directly continuous with the issues of deception, invasion of privacy, and deprivation of consent discussed in the earlier section. That is, serious ethical problems may arise because the investigator represents himself as an independent researcher when in fact his research is linked, directly or indirectly, to the mission of counterinsurgency agencies; or because the investigator violates the confidentiality of data by turning over information to such agencies; or because the investigator exposes the group he studies to possible harm or manipulation without informing them of these risks. However, the professional associations have found it even more difficult to deal with these problems than with the ethical problems arising in the usual investigator–subject relationship. The issues are more complicated than those involved in the one-to-one relationship of investigator and subject because they are intertwined closely with the sponsorship and political purposes of the research, and because they usually involve the possibility of harm to a group (such as an ethnic minority or a political faction) rather than to an identifiable individual.

Indeed, the imposition of controls and sanctions in this domain represents some very real dangers to the freedom of research from political constraints, since the line between ethical and political objections to a piece of research is often very hard to draw. Nevertheless, the line must be drawn. Violations of the rights of groups to voluntary informed consent and to the protection of their privacy, their confidences, and their interests cannot be countenanced on the basis of the investigator's legitimate right to freedom of research. Existing review committees and ethics committees must extend their functions—or special mechanisms of protection and accountability must be set up—to handle these types of violations. The challenge is to develop criteria and procedures that will make it possible to delegitimize research activities that are based on the systematic violation of the rights of subjects, without legitimizing the imposition of political controls on research. In general, I would follow the principle of reserving external controls and sanctions to those cases that involve fairly obvious abuses, while leaving it to other mechanisms to correct for the more subtle and remote disadvantages that social research may bring to powerless groups.

Patterns of research sponsorship. A necessary condition for achieving greater balance in the products of social research is to retain and in fact enhance the ability of social science to bring independent and diverse perspectives to bear on the study of social institutions and societal processes. In developing a national research policy, therefore, it is essential to work out patterns of research sponsorship and funding that are consistent with this principle. The sponsorship of social research, or of any area within it, must be diversified as much as possible; it should not be entirely in the hands of either governmental or private agencies and, within the governmental framework, no area of research should be monopolized by a single agency or set of agencies. Such monopolies are particularly dangerous when they are held by a mission-oriented agency—for example, the military, which has had a virtual monopoly in supporting certain areas of scientific work in the United States. Similarly, there is a need for diversity in the recipients of research funds. If research is carried out in different types of organizational settings, located in different areas, and staffed by investigators with different backgrounds, then the range of perspectives is likely to be broadened. It would be useful, for example, to carry out some research outside of a university context—perhaps by a community agency—in order to balance out the special bias that the university scholar usually brings to a problem.

Special care must be taken to preserve the autonomy of the organizations in which social research is carried out—particularly the universities, which are designed to serve as a major source of independent perspectives in the society. Sponsoring agencies, as well as the universities themselves, have the responsibility of avoiding the types of contracts that will undermine their autonomy. Secret research provides the most obvious example here; many kinds of operational research may also be inappropriate for the university setting. This is another reason for experimenting with a variety of organizational settings for research. Certain kinds of research—such as research that is designed specifically to facilitate or evaluate the functioning of an operational agency—probably can be carried out more effectively in an in-house research facility or in an independent (nonuniversity) research organization. When carried out within the university, on the other hand, such research well may weaken the university's unique capacity as an autonomous agency. A good way of testing the autonomy of a given research project is to examine systematically the assumptions that underlie it—if possible, with the help of colleagues who approach the problem from different cultural perspectives. In a truly independent piece of research, there should be no assumption that the investigator feels bound to leave unquestioned.

Patterns of research participation. Perhaps the most important way of counteracting current imbalances is to extend the range of participants in the conduct of social research. At the level of the individual research project, this goal can be accomplished partly by the development of participatory research patterns, as described earlier. In an action research program, for example, the subjects play an active role in the formulation and conduct of the research and the research is addressed to the problems with which their community is concerned. Even when the opportunities for active participation of the subjects are limited, it is often possible to extend the range of investigators who participate in the research. Whenever an investigator carries out research in a culture or subculture different from his own, it is particularly important to involve social scientists who are members of the community under study as colleagues in the planning, conduct, and analysis of the research. Such involvement is important, not only for ethical reasons (i.e., because it helps to protect the interests of the group under study), but also for scientific reasons (i.e., because it helps to balance the investigator's perspective as an outsider with those of colleagues who qualify as insiders).

At the level of research policy and the organization of research, the need is to broaden the base of participation in the research process, nationally as well as internationally. I like to speak in this connection of the *democratization of the research community.* The capacities and opportunities to carry out social research must be made available to all segments of the population. By the same token, all segments should participate equally in the role of subject; the pattern must be one of reciprocal exposure rather than of a sharp division between those who do the research and those who are researched upon.

There are some inherent limitations in the extent to which the disadvantaged segments of the population can be represented genuinely in the research process. Members of these groups who receive training as social scientists are, by definition, no longer "typical" of the groups they represent. Because of their high level of education and the financial and cultural conditions associated with it, their interests and perspectives are likely to diverge in at least some important ways from those of the most disadvantaged segments of the society. Nevertheless, the base of social research would be broadened considerably if more of its participants were recruited from the segments of the society that are now underrepresented. It would bring into the field individuals who—though not quite typical of the disadvantaged groups—would have a greater identification with their problems and a greater awareness of their perspectives.

In speaking of representativeness, I do not mean to imply that social research ought to be transformed into a political process, in which scientific truth is determined by who prevails in a power struggle. This view sometimes is conveyed by self-appointed spokesmen for disadvantaged groups, who try to use their power to exclude outsiders from research in minority communities or to determine the conclusions that can be drawn from such research. In evaluating this kind of tactic, we must keep in mind that there is considerable ambiguity about whom such spokesmen represent; they do bring their own special interests to the situation, and there is at least the possibility that they merely are replacing one form of oppression of the powerless with another. Though these tactics may be based on a genuine concern with the power imbalance that has characterized so much of social research, I see them as a distortion of the process of democratizing the research community, which can only have the effect of undermining the integrity of the research enterprise.

Democratization, as I see it, would enhance rather than endanger the integrity of social research. It aims for representativeness in the sense that the perspectives of the disadvantaged groups would be brought to bear more fully and fairly on the research process. Broadening the base of participation in social research would allow the interests and frames of reference of the disadvantaged groups a larger role in the formulation of the questions to which the research addresses itself and in the interpretation of the research findings. By bringing a variety of perspectives to bear on research problems, democratization would not only reduce the likelihood that the products of the research would give advantages to some groups at the expense of others, but it would also increase the overall validity of these products.

Patterns of research utilization. To counteract the current power imbalance, it is essential to extend not only the range of those who participate in social research but also the range of those who are able to utilize its findings. At the level of the individual research project, we must develop and institutionalize mechanisms of providing the individuals, groups, and communities that serve as subjects some meaningful access to the data they contributed. Findings that might be potentially useful to them, or that conceivably might be used against their interests, should be communicated to them in language they can understand. The purpose of such communication would be to indicate concrete ways of utilizing the findings to their own advantage and of protecting themselves against the possibly damaging uses to which others might put these findings. Furthermore, community organizations trusted by the subjects can be given access to the findings (which in most cases would not mean the raw data), so that they can take steps to utilize them in the community's interest and to protect the community against potentially harmful consequences.

At the level of research policy and the organization of research, there is a need for wider distribution among all segments of the population of the skills and resources needed to utilize the data of social research. Organizations representing the interests of the disadvantaged segments of the population must acquire the capabilities for using research findings in the development of their own programs and in their inputs to the debates around local and national policies. A major component of the requisite skills and resources is the capacity to counteract incomplete or faulty interpretations and applications of research data that might be detrimental to the interests of their group.

In the final analysis, the democratization of the community of research producers and research users must be seen as part of the process of redistributing power within our society at large. Social (and other) scientists, however, can contribute to this larger process by correcting the imbalances within their own spheres.

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