PSYCHOLOGY
AND SOCIAL POLICY

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Controversies over social policy are a dominant feature of modern life. Policies must now be developed to deal with many issues that have previously been left to fate or to individual choice. The need for planning continues to grow as the world economy and polity become more interdependent, communication and transportation become more rapid, spheres of decision become more subject to societal and governmental shaping, and possible courses of action are expanded by the progress of science and technology. This book is an examination of the participation of psychology as a science of profession, and psychologists as scientists and professionals, in debates about the policies that might serve as the best means to desired ends.

Such debates increasingly involve appeals to scientific expertise. By now, very few are ever carried on for long without one side or another—usually both—calling on science to buttress a position. Sometimes this is quite appropriate: The best solution to a problem may hinge on scientific knowledge or on the use of the scientific method to gather the knowledge needed. But not all social questions hinge on such data, nor are such data always accessible. Nevertheless, appeals are made to science even when science cannot or should not answer.

Here, we face the phenomenon of inappropriately transferred credibility; for examples, when television stars who appeared in a show fictionalizing a social problem are asked to testify before Congressional committees trying to draft legislation dealing with that problem, or when athletes and popular musicians assume and are granted authoritative roles in disagreements about economics, race relations, education, or foreign policy. The misuse of science is perhaps a less blatant example. Protagonists may offer supposedly fact-based answers when the questions are not factual, as in the argument over the point at which a developing organism should be regarded as a human being. Some debaters may magnify small anomalies in an attempt to discredit a massive data base, as in the "creation science" controversy. One position may be emphasized and others ignored, giving a false picture of consensus even though scientists vigorously disagree, as in the
case of global warming. Debaters may extrapolate from minimal evidence to produce monumental speculations, as in the detailed descriptions of "nuclear winter."

The culprits are not only politicians, activists, the media, or the public: Scientists themselves get caught up in the same game. Many people whose professional lives have been dedicated to the careful collection and balanced evaluation of evidence have been known to throw all this overboard when the opportunity arises to use their scientific credibility in the service of some personally important cause. The heat of verbal battle may sweep aside the qualifications that usually characterize conclusions presented in scientific publications.

The social sciences are obviously relevant to many social dilemmas, and people who choose such disciplines may have strong feelings about social issues. Not surprisingly, then, social scientists have enthusiastically drawn upon their training, methods, and status in advocating particular policies. Our own discipline, psychology, has been highly visible in this regard. The introductory chapter presents a tiny sample of _ex-cathedra_ statements of this sort, issuing from the most prominent psychological societies. Most readers will already know that these organizations have made many such advocacy statements and that a much larger number have been issued by other groups and by individual professionals in psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science. In fact, almost any newspaper will provide new examples each day.

The purpose of this book is to examine this involvement. The first chapter offers a general analysis of the kinds of issues in which psychology has taken an active role and examines the propriety and possible consequences of advocacy. It also presents some cautionary notes on the role(s) of psychologists, and particularly of their professional associations, in policy debates.

The rest of the book is divided into three major areas: international issues, domestic policies, and criminal justice. Several topics in each area are covered. Each topic is discussed in two chapters. The chapter authors are scientific experts who have well-known positions on the particular topic. We asked each contributor to prepare an independent review of the social science data relevant to policy development on the topic and of the policy positions that had been advocated by social scientists and then to evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the recommendations in light of the data.

Each pair of authors was selected on the basis that in the past one had taken an activist stance—that is, made or supported policy recommendations on the basis of existing data—while the other had been less confident that the data would justify recommendations. Neither author saw the contribution of the other prior to writing. We wanted to avoid the danger that personal confrontation might affect the assessment of the scientific evidence. Of course, because both participants were already prominent in the controversy, in a few cases one contributor guessed the identity of the other contributor and targeted the resultant chapter accordingly.

Both we and the contributing authors had some surprises. Some of the controversies we wanted to include—for example, the nature of racism in U.S. society and what to do about it—had to be dropped because no willing spokesperson appeared for one side or the other. In other cases, potential contributors were tired of the controversy or did not wish to re-engage adversaries with whom they had contended in the past. Some of the papers turned out to be uncharacteristically ambivalent, compared with previous writings of the author. Perhaps the knowledge that the chapter would appear in immediate proximity to a critique made the writer
less forthright or motivated a new and more cautious set of conclusions. One author who had been recruited to represent a particular side of a controversy was persuaded by his review of the literature that it was the wrong side and wound up in the role opposite to his intended one. We can fairly say that putting this book together was a learning experience, both for ourselves and for at least some of our contributors.

The chapters should be read for their own specific contributions to individual policy debates. The literature reviews and evaluations will be useful in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the relevant psychological evidence. Beyond that, however, we hope that the paired chapters dealing with each topic will serve as case studies of scientific involvement in policy advocacy, from which appropriate principles and procedures may be derived and generalized.

Peter Suedfeld
Philip E. Tetlock
Psychologists as Policy Advocates: The Roots of Controversy

Peter Suedfeld and Philip E. Tetlock

At first glance, the chapters in this book appear to have very little to do with one another. The authors cover an enormous range of intellectual and policy areas: from nuclear deterrence to pornography, from affirmative action to the accuracy of eyewitness testimony. On closer inspection, however, the common theme becomes obvious. In each policy domain, the authors are grappling with the same fundamental question, but often they reach radically different answers. The question is whether behavioral and social scientists, either as individuals or through their professional organizations, have enough evidence to justify their taking sides on controversial political issues, and if so, under what conditions, on what grounds, and in what way.

Looking at the scholarly community at large, it is clear that this question has already been answered, usually in the affirmative. Advocacy positions taken by psychologists, both as individuals and as groups, share the same problems and characteristics, although those taken by groups involve additional issues of consensus, delegation, and legitimacy. But notwithstanding these difficulties, psychologists have expressed themselves freely on a wide range of policy issues.

Many policy-related statements and recommendations have been made by psychologists and by psychology organizations. Among the shared characteristics are a clear stand on one side of a controversial, or at least debatable, issue and the implication that this stand is based on a foundation of knowledge to which psychologists have special access by virtue of their professional training and experience. Consider the following selection of proclamations issued during the past 50 years:

- We, as psychologists, protest most emphatically against the common belief that wars are necessary results of human nature. This opinion is without scientific foundation.—Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Council, 1937, quoted in Kimmel (1986).
- [The Council] recognizes officially and makes suitable promulgation of the fact that it is scientifically and psychologically baseless, as well as in violation of

- . . . we call upon [the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.] to adopt an immediate mutual freeze on all further testing, production, and deployment of all nuclear warheads, missiles and delivery systems; and . . . upon the Administration and the Congress to transfer the funds saved to civilian use.—APA Council, 1983.

- The American Psychological Association is opposed to any attempts to require by statute or other means the inclusion of "creationism" within the science curriculum of the public schools.—APA Council, 1983.

- The American Psychological Association (1) encourages parents to monitor and to control television viewing by children; (2) requests industry representatives to take a responsible attitude in reducing direct imitable violence . . . and in providing more programming for children designed to mitigate possible effects of television violence. consistent with the guarantees of the First Amendment. . . .—APA Council, 1985.

- Be it resolved that the American Psychological Association encourage the elimination of both amateur and professional boxing . . . communicate its opposition to boxing to appropriate regulating bodies; assist state psychological societies to work with their state legislatures to enact laws to eliminate boxing. . . .—APA Council, 1986.

**ADVOCACY: A CONTROVERSIAL ROLE**

Statements of this sort can be viewed in at least two alternate ways. One is that the people making them are exercising their rights as citizens in a democracy in trying to influence public policies; the other is that they are speaking on the basis of knowledge that they have because of their special training and expertise in behavioral science, which is unavailable to the average citizen. In the former case, positions can be based on political ideology, moral codes, or self-interest (see Rudmin, 1986). But the latter viewpoint gives these comments an *ex cathedra* quality. To use a social psychological label, the implication is that the source has "expert knowledge" (French & Raven, 1959) that calls for more than just routine attention to what is said.

Our purpose is to consider this claim. First, we should dispose of the possibility that the claim is not being made. If it were not (that is, if these colleagues were speaking merely in their role as citizens), we would expect such arguments to appear in general-circulation magazines and newspapers, rather than in professional and scientific books and journals (and most prominently in *American Psychologist*, surely the most widely read psychology journal in the world). The authors' professional qualifications and affiliations would be irrelevant and therefore omitted (cf. Rapoport, 1984). At most, the affiliations might be appended (perhaps disingenuously) "for identification only." References in the text to psychological data or theories would be muted or absent. And, of course, we would not have such statements issued as the official positions of the committees and governing councils of professional organizations or of those organizations themselves.

If we accept that involvement in advocacy is based on at least self-perceived special knowledge, what are the main points of the debate? One set of arguments revolves around pragmatic consequences for psychology; another, about the appro-
appropriate role of organized psychology in advocacy; and a third, the extent to which the self-perception of relevant expertise is correct. To what extent are the psychological and cognate databases adequate for the justification of advocacy positions? Related to this issue, and to the value of psychological advice on policy, is a concern about the extent to which facts discovered through scientific research can and should be separated from value judgments based on the ideology of the organization or individual.

THE PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF ADVOCACY

Policy involvement by psychologists has had a long history. In the past century, psychologists in their role as citizens have taken stands on a wide range of controversial issues; and in their role as scientists they have enjoyed a string of successes in developing a knowledge base for improvements in applied practices and principles. In the early part of this century, several leaders of the profession were confident enough about these contributions to believe that large-scale social planning and design should be based on behavioral science research. Skinner’s *Walden Two* (1948) is the best-known, but by no means the first, example of this genre (see Morawski, 1982).

Psychologists as citizens have been politically active for as long as psychology has been an identifiable discipline. Our colleagues and our profession have a record of taking positions on controversial issues. We can look back to Hugo Münsterberg’s vociferous and generally anathemized opposition to United States’ participation in World War I; John Dewey’s part in the examination of Stalinist oppression in the 1930s; Wolfgang Köhler’s emigration from Germany at least in part because of the Nazi persecution of Jews; the wide-ranging involvement of social psychologists and several of their organizations in criticizing various socio-political trends in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s (Harris, Unger, & Stagner, 1986). Also there has been E. C. Tolman’s resignation from the University of California over the loyalty oath issue and the more recent support of Soviet dissidents and oppressed Chileans by APA Council resolutions.

It should be emphasized in the context of this book that the cases mentioned above did not directly cite the *imprimatur* of psychological knowledge. While the participants were clearly identified as psychologists, they generally acted from explicitly moral or political positions rather than from any claimed scientific expertise. One may argue that this is one place where science is not value-free, that an open society is a crucial prerequisite for the self-correcting process of generating knowledge. and that this rule applies to knowledge about human behavior (i.e., about the professional field of the scientific psychologist).

In Support of Advocacy

Psychologists devote their professional lives to the study of circumstances, many of which are directly or indirectly related to the state of society and the health and well-being of individuals. One of the officially stated purposes of the American Psychological Association is “to advance psychology . . . as a means of promoting human welfare” (American Psychological Association, 1984). Thus both our area of concentration and the goal of our profession are consistent with
the idea that we have an ethical basis for speaking out on policy issues. It would, in fact, be a violation of APA’s purpose and of our ethical obligations as both citizens and professionals not to speak out.

It follows from this position that if psychologists hold themselves aloof from policy debates, there may be serious costs. Not only could they be perceived as uncaring or as self-admittedly irrelevant (Task Force on Psychology and Public Policy, 1986), but useful psychological data and theories could be prevented from reaching a wide public audience. Politics abhors a vacuum; if the research community refrains from involvement in public controversies, someone else—perhaps much less principled and informed—simply will fill the void.

Proponents of advocacy have argued that psychologists are indeed uniquely qualified to investigate the causes of and potential solutions to many social problems. Among these are the concomitants of poverty and discrimination, criminal justice, issues of war and peace, child-rearing, facilities for physically and mentally handicapped people, and so on. Scientific studies in child development, social psychology, cognition, perception, learning, motivation, and physiological psychology can and have shed light on the implications of past and current policies related to these social issues. Perhaps more important, psychological research may help us to anticipate the effects of future policies or, conversely, to design future policies to reach desired effects (see, e.g., Kimmel, 1985). The latter role, that of conducting studies related to possible alternate policies (as opposed to merely evaluating current ones), has been supported even by colleagues generally cautious about psychology’s advocacy role (Cook, 1985). The question of legitimate expertise, which is at the heart of the debate, will be considered at length later in this chapter.

Prominent psychologists have strongly supported involvement in policy issues, not only on the substantive grounds of being able to make useful contributions (e.g., Cook, 1984; Deutsch, 1969), but also because such action would increase public support for the profession (DeLeon, 1986; Pallak & Kilburg, 1986; Task Force on Psychology and Public Policy, 1986). In the case of the APA, the degree of support for specific positions is difficult to ascertain, although in at least some instances a majority of members has been shown to favor Council resolutions. Even there, a warning is clear: As survey researchers are well aware, the result will depend on how the question is worded (see Schumann & Presser, 1981, on the sometime dramatic differences resulting from different ways of putting the same substantive question on surveys). For example, two surveys concerning the nuclear freeze resolution cited in this chapter showed that support for the APA Council’s action ranged from under 60% to 76% of the respondents (McConnell et al., 1986; Polyson, Stein, & Sholley, 1986; see also Schumann & Presser, 1981).

Arguments Against Advocacy

Pragmatic arguments opposing advocacy have highlighted a number of hazards. These include the danger of degrading the level of psychological discourse, the infringement of the ethics of scientific/professional roles, and possible negative repercussions for psychology itself if its practitioners get too embroiled in policy debates.
Modes of Discourse

Ethical and moral constraints differ greatly when one speaks as a politically involved partisan as opposed to a presumably disinterested scientist. Types and levels of deception, omission or distortion of opposing points of view, and ad hominem attacks are routine in political argument. They are expected and probably discounted by audiences, at least to some degree.

Scientists, on the other hand, are bound by both codified and implicit rules to present and evaluate information and arguments fully and dispassionately. The point is not whether this ideal is achievable in reality; it is that the scientist is supposed to strive toward it and that audiences imbued with respect for this goal may respond with less skepticism than they would in the more usual arenas of policy discourse. Scientists themselves, caught up in the debate, may come to shed more heat than light. Judge David L. Bazelon, in our opinion one of the most sophisticated and open-minded of American jurists in regard to the social sciences, has criticized psychologists’ failure to disclose all the facts underlying their conclusions both in the courtroom and in the public arena (Bazelon, 1982). Psychologists who have served as expert witnesses can testify to the temptation to exaggerate one’s database in the heat of cross-examination.

The dangers of blurring the line have another unintended effect: the growing suspicion by scientists themselves that their colleagues may not be fully honest and disinterested when they get involved in advocacy issues (Hammond & Adelman, 1976). The proposed science court, with an explicitly adversarial relationship between scientific proponents and opponents of alternative policies, would have institutionalized this suspicion. The image of scientists hunting for the advantage of whichever side hired them (or engaged their emotions) was chilling to many people, and the idea of the science court seems to have been abandoned. A better piece of advice may be derived from Harold T. Shapiro’s (1984) editorial in Science on the appropriateness for universities of taking general policy positions, a closely analogous matter. Shapiro reminds academicians of the traditional ideal that their institutions are neutral sources of knowledge and points out the dangers—both pragmatic and ethical—of abandoning this stance.

Exploiting Irrelevant Status

Another problem is whether it is ethically appropriate to use professional status in political argument. As we have seen all too frequently in the case of popular entertainers, sports figures, and celebrities of many sorts, media prominence in one role appears to increase the individual’s credibility (or at least attention-getting ability) in many other roles, even those that are completely unrelated to one’s original basis of eminence (cf. McGuire’s 1985 discussion of the persuasion-facilitating effects of irrelevant source characteristics).

In professional matters, psychology’s code of ethics explicitly prohibits offering services in areas outside the individual’s specialization. Is it then ethical for scientists to claim professional expertise in a context where such expertise is substantively irrelevant or at least dubious, but where they know it will lend their arguments additional weight? Should we not expect our colleagues to follow stricter standards in such situations than we expect from movie stars or the authors of best-selling fiction?
Effects on Psychology

We must also raise the question of the effects that policy advocacy can have on the profession. Specific criticisms have been leveled not only at organizational pronouncements, but at a number of individual initiatives. One notorious example was Kenneth B. Clark's APA presidential address (1971), which suggested that mental health professionals monitor the psychological stability of governmental leaders and administer medication to ensure that power was used "positively." The subsequent arguments covered all bases, from the tenuousness of the factual foundation for such a role, through the rejection of behavioral scientists taking on the role of a supra-government, to the anti-democratic elitism of the recommendation (Tetlock, Mitchell, & McGuire, 1991).

More recently, a major arena has been nuclear disarmament. Some of the more controversial comments have included Lifton's (1982) hypothesis of "psychic numbing." The hypothesis posits that someone who voices a fear of nuclear war is afraid of nuclear war; people who do not voice fear have merely repressed their fear because it is so overwhelming. Although this psychological catch-22 has been attacked, it has become so popular in some circles that an attempt was made in the late 1980s to incorporate nuclear numbing as a diagnostic category in the psychiatric Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.

One paper proposing that patients in psychotherapy should be subjected to awareness-raising concerning the dangers of nuclear war includes a disclaimer that "I do not propose that we diagnose and incarcerate politicians or scientists for their nuclear madness" (Nelson, 1986, p. 551). This statement appears one page after the remark that "We need to see things as they actually are. This is perhaps our greatest psychological challenge." In a critique, Flanagan and Sommers (1986) raised a number of ethical objections to this approach, arguing for the need for therapists to be committed to the patient's freedom to make his or her own choices.

Let us move to another topic. Herbert Kelman (1983) has argued that the United States government should take steps toward legitimizing a formal Palestine Liberation Organization role in talks with Israel. Again, the position is obviously controversial, but, although the proposal was based upon psychological expertise (Kelman assessed Yasser Arafat's cognitive style as manifested in conversation, an assessment that played a key role in the formulation of his recommendation), the scientific justification for it is less than overwhelming. Questions can be asked about the validity and reliability of Kelman's estimate of overt cognitive complexity (flexibility, willingness to compromise, understanding the other side's point of view, and openness to new information, ideas, and policy proposals) from the particular database. Also questionable are the relationship between overt (i.e., verbally expressed) and covert complexity: the relationship of either of these complexities to Arafat's willingness to accept a cooperative solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the relationship between any hypothetical willingness and actual behavior, given that the latter is constrained by Arafat's dependence on other Palestinian, non-Palestinian Arab, and non-Arab groups and leaders: and whether in view of political realities such a solution is feasible, regardless of Arafat's personal stance or cognitive characteristics.

Similar complications can be adduced for the Israeli and American responses to any proposal such as Kelman's. Rebuttals (Kendler, 1983; Mansdorf, 1983) argued that there is neither empirical evidence nor theoretical justification to support the
policy proposal. One title sums up the issue: "Scientific conclusions or political advocacy?"

An equally vexing matter is the possible rebound effect outside the ranks of psychologists. How does the general public and smaller groups within it, such as government officials or elected office-holders, react to statements by groups of psychologists on nuclear strategy or public funding of daycare centers? Like psychologists themselves, they may be unaware that a position has even been taken, but many, and particularly those who have official and/or professional involvement in the issue, will probably be better informed. They may think the statements right or wrong. They may also consider the making of such statements, irrespective of their own political stance, legitimate or illegitimate (Bazelon, 1982; De Leon, 1986; Fishman & Neigher, 1982; Hatch, 1982).

These judgments may have significant consequences for the discipline and its practitioners in the future. Statements such as "The myth of 'value-free' psychologists pursuing 'truths' about human behavior is no longer a functional ideology for our profession" (Task Force on Psychology and Public Policy, 1986, p. 914) would certainly not encourage decision makers or the public to perceive our recommendations as disinterested.

As another example, Haan (1982, p. 1097) has suggested that "The Reagan administration's attack on social research may reflect its intuitive apprehension that social science often 'bootlegs' moral values that run counter to conservative ideologies." The history of the involvement of psychology in policy debates validates this apprehension empirically, not just intuitively, but even if we ignore ideological bias, we may ask ourselves whether it is appropriate for us to "bootleg" any moral value under the cover of social science (see also Hatch, 1982).

**Advocacy by Organized Psychology**

Aside from psychological organizations that were established specifically to influence social policy [e.g., the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the Psychologists' League, or Psychologists for Social Responsibility (see Harris et al., 1986)], official advocacy positions have been under fire. The American Psychological Association, the world's largest organization of psychologists, may serve as an example. As we indicated previously, there has been membership support for various resolutions of the APA Council of Representatives; on the other hand, there has been vocal dissent from specific position statements as well as from the whole idea of making such statements outside a narrowly defined area (e.g., Miller, 1969). This area covers issues directly related to psychology as a discipline and profession. Examples are funding levels for behavioral science, the regulation of animal research, or hospital privileges for clinical psychologists. Even in cases such as these, one may argue about the self-aggrandizing positions of a supposedly scientific body (particularly when the statements are cast in terms of "evidence").

In view of the dual nature of APA as a professional guild and a scientific society, the latter criticisms are probably unreasonable. Nor is this kind of advocacy unique to APA. Many scientific organizations have lobbied intensely for support of "big science" enterprises such as the human genome project and the Superconducting Super Collider. But the disaffection and defection of many colleagues from APA is a demonstrable fact (Mangan, 1987), and even aside from
personal communications by a number of our friends and acquaintances, there is
evidence that disagreement over advocacy positions is at least a contributory cause
(e.g., Bergin, 1982). In 1975, two thoughtful observers (Rappoport & Kren, 1975)
suggested a moratorium on APA advocacy while several difficult aspects of the
issue were examined. This pause did not occur, and the problem continued to get
worse. Recent proposals that would have drastically restructured the APA, while
primarily reflecting a scientist-professional split, were designed partly to alleviate
conflict about advocacy.

A 1969 survey (Policy and Planning Board, 1970) already disclosed strongly
divergent views on the part of APA members. Cautionary remarks have been made
by leading psychologists, some of them the very people who have been effective
researchers in policy-related areas (Hartsough & Savitsky, 1984; Kendler, 1983;
Miller, 1969; Sarason, 1984, 1986). Miller's comments are particularly interesting
because they refer to the human welfare clause of the APA bylaws, so highly
valued by the proponents of advocacy: "Let us by all means do everything we can
to promote human welfare, but let us not forget that our real strength in that cause
will come from our scientific knowledge, not from our national Association" (p.
1065). It has also been suggested that our expertise be turned toward designing
good tests of possible social policy rather than toward making recommendations
about it (Campbell, 1969; Cook, 1985).

There are probably few, if any, psychologists who would propose that our
organizations never take a policy stand. It is the range of issues on which such
positions have been taken that fuels the flames. For example, the Council of
Representatives has put APA on record for taking policy stands against the United
Nations resolution that Zionism is a form of racism, in favor of U.S. participation
in UNESCO, against corporal punishment of children, for the Equal, Rights
Amendment, supporting gun control laws, opposing the required teaching of "creation
science" in public schools, and condemning torture.

One result of this scattergun approach has been a continuing major dispute
about the circumstances that legitimize official pronouncements on social and poli-
itical matters. What issues should come within our purview? What kinds of state-
ments should we feel free to make? What kind of review and authorization process
should be required before a statement is promulgated? These are all controversial
topics that affect the leaders, administrators, and members of the organization.

The confusion, whether inadvertent or not, between our roles as citizens and as
scientists has played a major role in the heated debate over official advocacy. In
almost every instance when scientific organizations have sponsored such pro-
nouncements, various members have objected on at least two grounds. First, no
one has a right to speak for the society unless all members have had a chance to
register their position (or, given the diversity of psychology, perhaps those mem-
bers who are experts in the specific field). This leads to the question, supposing
that such a referendum were held, what outcome would justify the organization in
voicing an opinion? Total unanimity on important social issues is most unlikely but
anything less seems to ignore the perspectives of those members who disagree with
the official stance. A report of precise distributions would be less contentious
within the organization, but would hardly make for the clarion call that seems to be
the point of taking positions in the first place.

Second, members join a professional society for professional purposes, and not
for general political ones. When they want to express their judgment as citizens,
they should do so through organizations established for that purpose, in the voting booth, and in other contexts not tied to their professional identity. Thus, the professional organization has no business expressing a formal position on such issues, even in the unlikely case that every single member agreed on that position.

A third criticism is the danger that the organization's official voice will violate its own ethical precepts. For example, the Ethical Principles of Psychologists, promulgated by APA, includes the following (Principle 4, Section g): "Psychologists present the science of psychology . . . fairly and accurately, avoiding misrepresentation through sensationalism, exaggeration, or superficiality. Psychologists are guided by the primary obligation to aid the public in developing informed judgments, opinions, and choices" (APA Directory, 1985, p. xxix). Yet APA itself has been accused of misrepresenting available data on homosexuality in a Supreme Court brief (Cameron & Cameron, 1988). To quote these authors, "... in violation of standards for scientific reporting, [a finding] was pulled out of context so that it favored the APA position, and the studies the APA cited in this section of the brief were either contrary to, nonsupportive of, or did not bear upon the APA's contentions" (p. 255). Cameron and Cameron cite another article of the Ethical Principles, 1a: "[Psychologists] provide thorough discussions of the limitations of their data ... and they acknowledge the existence of alternative hypotheses and explanations of their findings." They conclude, "Ostensibly an association of psychologists should perform according to its standards when attempting to influence public policy. The American Psychological Association does not appear to have fulfilled this obligation in its amicus curiae brief to the Supreme Court" (p. 269).

A similar criticism was voiced concerning APA's amicus curiae briefs on whether adolescents seeking abortions should have to obtain their parents' consent. The APA argued against such a requirement, on the basis that the research literature shows that "minors 14 years of age and older generally possess the ... demonstrated capacity for rational decision making, to a degree that is not measurably different from that of adults." According to the critics, "The briefs overstated what is known about the development of decision-making skills" (both quotes from Gardner, Scherer, & Tester, 1989, p. 897).

Even more disturbing is a comparison between the adolescent abortion rights issue and another APA amicus curiae brief, this time on whether an adolescent should be subject to the death penalty. Here, although the jury had decided that "the crime was especially heinous, atrocious and cruel," the APA argued against the death penalty on the grounds that the scientific literature "shows differences between adolescents and adults in ability to plan and control behavior. In addition, the research literature shows that adolescents are more vulnerable than adults and do not take into account, as adults are able to, the consequences of their behavior" (both quotes from Sandler, 1988, p. 2).

Obviously, one can argue about the validity of these criticisms. The point is that there is at least a clear possibility that those speaking for the APA, in their zeal to advance certain social policy positions and combat others, may ignore or misinterpret the evidence and even contradict themselves from one instance to the next. Such actions bring the organization into disrepute among its own members and the entire field of psychology into disrepute among jurists and ordinary citizens.

Self-contradiction stemming from an official position can result in more concrete injury as well. In 1986, the APA Council of Representatives adopted a resolution attacking apartheid in South Africa, one of whose clauses stated that the
APA "urge[s] American psychologists to refuse to collaborate in projects sponsored by the South African government until human rights reforms are instituted." Shortly thereafter, APA received an appeal for help from a South African psychologist who wanted to establish a training program for Black health service workers to treat head- and brain-injured patients (an appreciable proportion of whom would probably have been the victims of police violence). Because the project was getting some funding from the South African government, the Council of Representatives decided to stick to the letter of its resolution and denied any assistance. To most observers, this decision appeared to be directly contrary to the spirit of the apartheid motion (and, it should be said, overruled a positive recommendation from the APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology).

Our View on Advocacy

In harmony with our feeling that any advocacy role requires disclosure, the authors of this chapter want to make clear where we stand. We do not pretend to be neutral on these issues. Even if playing by scientific rules—full disclosure of all evidence, even that adverse to one's own cause, as well as of the weaknesses of the evidence in favor of that cause—handicaps scientists in the political arena, in our view the ethics of the profession require such adherence.Modes of discourse inappropriate to science remain inappropriate, no matter what political questions are involved or how fervent a scientist's feelings are. If he or she wishes to abandon these rules, the scientific role and any associated status or claim to expertise must be abjured.

Our own position is one of cautious involvement. We are comfortable with psychology taking on the role of compiling and disseminating information. Given the complexity of social issues and the nature of social science data, we are much less comfortable with the idea that the discipline should act as a policy advocate (cf. Weiss & Weiss, 1981) except under limited circumstances and in limited ways.

THE ISSUE OF EXPERTISE

How right psychologists are to claim special knowledge is one of the primary sources of tension in this book. In general, proponents of advocacy assume or assert that psychologists do in fact have professional knowledge that can and should be applied to social problems (see Argyris, 1975). Just how it should be applied is a topic of disagreement. Should the psychologist be an advocate for particular ideologies or positions (Bramel & Friend, 1981) or a neutral expert making knowledge and judgment available to any comer (Münsterberg, 1913; Weiss & Weiss, 1981)? Should the application be open and nonmanipulative (Argyris, 1975), or should it be pursued covertly, without letting members of the target audience know that they are in effect serving as subjects (Abelson & Zimbardo, 1970; Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984; Varela, 1971; Zimbardo, 1972)?

Equally knowledgeable psychologists disagree about when the database of our discipline justifies taking policy positions. The opposing judgments rest on different epistemological baselines for assessing the minimal amount and quality of scientific evidence that would justify advocacy on given topics. This is one of the
major issues that this book addresses. We argue that there are different thresholds of acceptability for disseminating information relevant to a policy and for taking a scientific position on that policy. We do not expect to resolve this conflict; indeed, it has been thoughtfully argued that the philosophical tensions attendant to the diversity of professional activities and outlooks of psychologists make it impossible to resolve (Hillerbrand, 1987). We do hope, however, to shed additional light on the matter.

It can be argued that even at their worst, research data are better than the kind of anecdotal evidence so frequently used to develop or to justify policy positions even where research data exist (Nisbett & Ross, 1980, in Chapter 3). A few well-publicized examples of welfare fraud or of violent crime by parolees may have more impact on welfare or parole policy than many carefully conducted statistical studies. The law of small numbers applies: Each such example is inferred to stand for vast numbers of as yet undiscovered counterparts. Observers who are impressed even by the low quality of the evidentiary base in key policy issues may be willing to set a low threshold of data requirements for psychology's involvement in policy debates.

Conversely, being better than abysmally bad is not necessarily the same as being good enough. Before making a public commitment, psychologists and their organizations should insist on standards of scientific rigor and quality of evidence comparable to those by which we would judge a manuscript submitted to one of our better journals. From this standpoint, a research literature consisting of a few studies, some perhaps with flawed designs, limited ecological validity, or inconsistent findings, does not warrant a scientific or organizational position. We must demand a higher threshold of proof.

One possibly useful guideline for judging advocacy is to look at history. What types of problems are particularly amenable to social science-based interventions?

**Empirical Focus**

Expertise rather than morality plays the major role in successful translations from psychological research data to real world applications. Behavior modification, based on evidence from laboratory studies of conditioning and arousal, does not claim particular moral insights as opposed to those of psychoanalysis; but its results, in certain specifiable situations, show it to be more powerful in eliminating a range of agonizing, life-restricting behavior patterns (Wolpe, 1981). Equipment and environments designed to fit human limitations and capacities, as measured by human factors researchers, can facilitate performance and satisfaction while reducing accidental injuries and deaths. They are not superior in some abstract moral sense, but they work better.

We obviously do not mean that empirical advances are unrelated to morality or values. One can argue that a relatively mechanistic treatment procedure is less humane and therefore morally inferior to one that leads to greater self-insight, regardless of their relative effects on a particular symptom. Others can maintain, just as easily, that relieving a patient of distressing symptoms or reducing discomfort, stress, and inefficiency at work are both pragmatically and ethically desirable. That, in fact, is the point: The argument over values can go in directions not determined by the bare facts.
Compatibility of Scale

Another aspect of successful data-based applications is that they tend to move from evidence collected under limited, small-scale research conditions to comparably limited, small-scale problems. Let us look, for example, at ways to increase intergroup cooperation. A relevant line of psychological theorizing is Allport's (1954) analysis of how prejudice may be reduced through interracial contact under specified conditions. Basic research (Sherif, 1958) had demonstrated that the existence of superordinate goals (where a solution is important to both groups, and neither group can solve the problem alone) leads to increasing collaboration and diminishing intergroup hostility. Aronson and Osherow (1980) integrated these points in developing a program to increase interracial harmony in primary school classrooms. Each child is given one component of a body of knowledge, and the group task can only be solved if all of the components are considered. This "jigsaw" procedure sets up superordinate goals in such a way as to ensure that pupils from all ethnic backgrounds have crucial parts of the solution. This and similar methods of "cooperative learning" have resulted in increased cross-ethnic friendships within the classroom and, in a few studies, outside it as well (Slavin, 1985).

Moving to Social Policy

Building on a history of active involvement in political issues and a history of successful small-scale applications (note that we posit two separate histories here), psychologists individually and collectively have moved toward using their research data to justify public policy positions. But neither of the two distinct streams of tradition necessarily makes a joining of this sort either morally or pragmatically appropriate.

In general, the shift from micro- to macro-level applications runs into obstacles that do not hinder within-level transfer out of the laboratory. Many of these problems find psychologists unprepared (and sometimes unaware).

Complications of Complexity

Among other problems, macro-level applications can lead to a potentially enormous range of unanticipated and frequently undesired side effects. These result from adding a great range of alternate considerations and uncontrolled variables. Relatively simple causal chains observed in the laboratory and then in small-scale applications are transplanted to social systems with large numbers of interacting moderator variables and complex causal feedback loops. These complicate both the factual and moral aspects of the situation far beyond anything sensed in the original research. As a result, techniques that have proven efficacious and morally uncontroversial can lose both virtues when blown out of their proper proportion.

For example, token economies may translate reinforcement theory into helpful procedures for training handicapped patients in some aspects of health care. But when the approach is advocated as a societal blueprint, it runs into enormous empirical problems of individual differences, reactance, and intrinsic motivation. It also activates fundamental moral issues such as the trade-offs between freedom and social control, what to do with deviant citizens, and the most fundamental dilemma of political and constitutional theory: Who controls the controllers (Dahl, 1989; Meehl, 1975)?
Let's look again at the cooperative learning example cited earlier. The data indicate that this procedure often has the desired effect on interracial friendships. But how should it be operationalized as a social policy? And even if it could be so operationalized, what would the impact of such a policy be on the development of autonomous information seeking, on self-reliance, on the level of aspiration and striving among the best (as well as among average) performers, and on the consequent levels of achievement, economic efficiency, and societal innovation? A recent reviewer concludes that "The practical implications of the research . . . are unambiguous" (Slavin, 1985, p. 60). Perhaps, but they are certainly grossly incomplete; for example, the review does not at all address the issue of academic achievement.

**Incompatible Philosophies**

Another serious difficulty is a possible mismatch between our world view and the topics to which we address ourselves. Some assumptions that are common in psychology may not be appropriate in other contexts. Among relevant examples are the applications of the underlying philosophy of clinical psychology and psychiatry to issues of criminology (Menninger, 1968; Szasz, 1961) and international crisis management (Blight, 1986; Garfinkle, 1986). In the latter context, psychologists may be unsuccessful in applying well-supported theoretical generalizations because they misjudge the tractability of the conflict of interest between the two states. Various other misperceptions may also prove to be obstacles (e.g., Goodwin, 1971).

**Opportunity Costs and Trade-Offs**

Pursuing one desirable outcome may preclude or impair the pursuit of other equally desirable goals. For example, channeling educational resources into programs promoting interracial harmony may reduce the amount of money available for promoting exceptional talent in mathematics and science. A variant of this dilemma is that policies designed to reach desired ends may also involve harmful side effects.

**Problems Related to Research Design**

One set of problems in this category concerns all of the familiar issues related to the external or ecological validity of research evidence. Real-world policies involve many more causal variables than researchers can manipulate, randomize, hold constant, or simply be aware of, even in the most rigorous and meticulous research program. At a minimum, great caution is advised. Research experience in a remarkably broad range of the subareas of psychology—cognitive, social, environmental, educational, health, personality, and industrial/organizational—indicates that the main effects of today frequently become the first- and higher-order interaction effects of tomorrow (cf. Cronbach & Snow, 1977; Gergen & Davis, 1985; McGuire, 1983; Meehl, 1978). The literature abounds in references to interactions between personality and situational variables, aptitudes and treatments, and contexts and tasks.

There is also an inherent bias in psychological research that hampers its generalization on the large scale. The goal in most studies is to maximize between-group variance. As a result, experimental treatments are designed to be as distinct from each other as possible without compromising internal validity. But in real policy
making, a politically acceptable solution may call for integrative policy mixes, that is, for taking selected components from each of various alternatives. The effects of such policy mixes do not always fall between the effects of the component policies.

SEPARATING FACTS FROM VALUES

We believe that the conceptual and methodological problems involved in generalizing from the psychology laboratory to large-scale social policy are daunting, more so than one might infer from the confident assertions of committed activists (e.g., Bevan, 1982; Task Force on Psychology and Public Policy, 1986). But there is also an entirely different set of objections stemming from a separate set of concerns. These concerns and objections are based on the familiar debate concerning the proper relationship between empirical facts and moral values. The history of the scientific enterprise reveals an evolution of perspective on this relationship that ranges from the view that science reveals the designs of God (or historical inevitability) and is thus, essentially, the handmaiden of religion (or the class struggle) to Hume’s position that one cannot validly argue from descriptive, factual premises to prescriptive conclusions (see, e.g., Graham, 1981). Some recent statements on the topic have asserted that the separation of the two realms is not merely undesirable, but by the nature of human beings and of science (and particularly of psychology) even theoretically impossible (Howard, 1985; Manicas & Secord, 1983).

This debate has attracted many psychologists, perhaps more so as the profession becomes more involved in making normative statements outside its obvious spheres of special knowledge. Some behavioral scientists (e.g., Bramel & Friend, 1981; Fox, 1986; Larsen, 1986) argue that the most appropriate function of the field is to criticize and offer alternatives to currently dominant social assumptions, policies, and groups. This argument has perhaps made more headway in the strictly social sciences than in psychology (cf. Ginsburg, 1987; Kolata, 1987). These writers usually conclude that very little effort has been made in this direction. Others (e.g., Robinson, 1984) equally firmly hold that the task is to develop empirically grounded and rigorously testable theories of human behavior and to avoid becoming entangled in nonscientific debates about value-defined policies. These observers usually conclude that we are failing to live up to these standards and are embroiling ourselves in controversies in which we have no business meddling.

We have already referred to the disturbing possibility that fervent advocacy may impair the scientist’s openness about the limitations of data relevant to a debate. The temptation is to note only the strengths of the evidential basis for one’s own position and only the weaknesses of that supporting the opposition. There is a possibly even more dangerous implication, that scientists may actually suppress data that support the “wrong” side (i.e., not merely ignore or belittle them in policy debates, but actually work to keep them from becoming publicly known). As an ominous example, not long ago a group of psychologists (Pollack, Crain, Borbely, Naimark, & Rabinowitz, 1983) criticized the American Psychologist for publishing an article on the solidly established abuse of psychiatry in suppressing political dissent in the Soviet Union (Faraone, 1982). While the critique addressed itself partly to the substance of the article (which was later thoroughly supported by public statements of the Soviet government), its self-admitted major objection
was that such publications might impair U.S.–Soviet detente and exacerbate international tension.

It is bad enough that the repercussions of some social movements affect scholarship and stifle inquiry (Mednick, 1989) by making it difficult to obtain financial, moral, and professional support for dissident lines of research and theorizing. Some colleagues have gone further, even so far as to propose that lines of research be abandoned if they could lead to socially undesirable outcomes. Sarason (1984) takes this position about research on racial differences in intelligence, which he feels should not be supported or encouraged (for dissenting views on that article, see “Comments on Sarason,” 1985). It is only one step from there to withholding publication. Will we have to live with a code according to which a true believer can ethically shred data that contradict his or her view of the ultimate good? Can science live with such a code?

For our part, we feel that suppressing facts assumes too much omniscience on the part of the scientist. In other words:

*Knowledge is supposed to belong to the storehouse of human information, not to some preferred person or subgroup. By the same token, of course, uses of which some researchers might approve would be disliked by other scientists. There is no justification for assuming that researchers are uniquely qualified to dictate or control the possible uses of knowledge that they produce. Scientific expertise does not ensure civic virtue, morality, or wisdom.* (Suedfeld, 1980, p. 221)

As with freedom of speech in general, we hold with John Stuart Mill that the free marketplace of ideas is the proper forum for debates not only about data but about their implications, and that the suppression of evidence for political reasons is a violation of scientific ethics (see also Mahoney, 1985).

We agree with those who claim that there is no value-free science. The tenet that science should be value-free is itself valued-based. “Value freeness” is also obviously limited to sets of values that lie outside science per se. No advocate of the scientific method for generating knowledge would suggest that as scientists we should compromise those values on which science itself is philosophically based: empiricism, free inquiry, public verifiability, and so on, even though scientists may not see completely eye to eye on what all of these terms mean in a given context (see Howard, 1985; Krasner & Houts, 1984). In a particular situation, the scientist’s role and its ethical concomitants may have to be subordinated to other roles (parent, citizen, ideologue), but that is a separate, although not always easily separable, issue.

### The Goal of Differentiation

We agree that one cannot easily divorce facts from values. Getting involved in policy arguments reflects one set of values; so does opposition to such involvement; and so does saying nothing at all. But the proposition we advance is that a clear recognition of value implications is crucial to the scientist’s participation in such disputes. When behavioral researchers append their professional credentials to a policy position, they are at least implicitly promising to adhere to the value system of the scientist, not the polemicist. That means they are under special obligation to present all of the facts as far as known, describe the limitations of the empirical base, acknowledge inconsistent or contradictory facts and theories, and
clearly separate speculations, guesses, and personal preferences from the findings and explanations derived from the research.

Further, we contend that this role differentiation is crucial if social science is to be at all credible in its contributions to policy debates, particularly in view of the obstacles to generalization mentioned earlier. Knowledgeable segments of the political audience are aware, in broad outline if not in detail, of the limitations of our data and theories. For us to take strong positions without acknowledging those limitations is, in effect, to mislead our audience, and we will lose credibility when a significant portion of the listeners can detect the deception (cf. Bazelon, 1982). Given the dynamic, continuous nature of the research process, it is also true that anything we don’t know today we may know tomorrow. Conversely, anything we think we know today may turn out tomorrow to have been wrong. Unqualified extrapolations are thus triply inappropriate.

The Value Bias of Psychologists

There is one more point concerning past involvement in policy disputes. Earlier in this chapter, we mentioned some of the previous occasions on which psychologists and their organizations have taken public stands. Without having conducted a systematic content analysis, we nevertheless consider it safe to assert that the positions taken by our colleagues have typically been on the liberal side of such arguments. The dominant values expressed have been on the side of reduction of military forces, negotiated compromise of international disagreements, “reducing social class inequalities and redistributing power” in society (Albee, 1986), preferential treatment for disadvantaged groups, emphasizing the rights of defendants in criminal trials, and so on (e.g., American Psychological Association, 1987).

It should be noted that, as the accepted liberal position has changed on some issues, so has the dominant voice within psychology. Support for the war effort in the 1940s has been replaced by an emphasis on arms control and peace studies; the drive for equal opportunity in education and employment has given way to advocating affirmative action. There is pressure by accreditation committees toward meeting statistical goals of representativeness among the faculty and students of academic departments of psychology, and within the APA itself, slates based on demographics for governance bodies. Also, early support for the fight against censorship has been succeeded by opposition to the free dissemination of violent and pornographic material (see Harris et al., 1986; Huesmann & Malamuth, 1986).

Among the dangers of advocacy is formal or informal punishment for colleagues whose interpretation of the data goes against the conventional wisdom of the day (Chesler, Sanders, & Kalmuss, 1989; Lineberry, 1988; Stein, 1988). The persecution of Eysenck and Jensen for their positions on the heritability of personality and intelligence comes easily to mind. At the time of this writing, a similar situation exists for Philippe Rushton, a Canadian psychologist who interprets his and others’ data as showing genetically determined racial differences on a wide range of characteristics, from sexual behavior and child-rearing to intelligence. Although during the 1988–1989 period he held a Guggenheim Fellowship and published several articles (not all on race) in peer-reviewed journals, his department has judged his performance to be below minimum acceptable standards and has admitted to using a more rigorous method of evaluation than usual.
Like all major policy issues, the ones on which our profession has taken positions involve value trade-offs. Decision makers must choose between the advantages and disadvantages of competing policy options. No realistic policy option has only advantages or only disadvantages, a consideration that too often disappears in the writing of position statements.

A general question frequently raised in this context concerns the relationship between one's interpretation of the facts and one's own value preferences (see, e.g., Albee, 1983; Eysenck, 1982). Historical observation (Jervis, 1976) and social psychological theory (e.g., Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958) both suggest that the relationship between these two classes of variables is likely to be substantial. Granted that it is hard to separate the causal direction of the two components (i.e., the degree to which factual assessments shape value judgments or vice versa), it is reasonably clear that policy advocates often align assessments and preferences in highly consistent and predictable configurations. An analyst's affirmation of egalitarian objectives, for example, typically coincides with the ascription of poverty and criminality to external, societal causes such as discrimination or class oppression. Low acceptance of egalitarianism as a value usually goes with the tendency to make largely internal attributions such as to lack of ability, laziness, impulsivity, and unwillingness to delay need gratification.

A Hypothetical Study

One way to disentangle the relative importance of factual and value disagreements as determinants of policy preferences would be through a thought (but potentially actual) experiment. Experts can be asked to assume that there is agreement on, for example, the relative contribution of continuing research on space weapons systems to defense against nuclear attack on the one hand and to destabilization of the nuclear balance of power on the other. Should we implement a defense system that raises the percentage of incoming enemy missiles destroyed in flight from 10% to 75% if such implementation would also raise the probability of an enemy first strike by a factor of 3? If in such "as if" situations the respondents still disagree on policy issues, then the disagreement is based on value differences. Of course, the interpretation can be made only if all relevant data questions are included in the hypothetically accepted set of established facts. The other side of this experiment would be a direct measurement of the experts' judgment about facts.

Some Real Studies

The factual and value components of policy disagreements are notoriously confounded (cf. Gowans, 1987). Because disentangling them is so difficult, some social scientists have concluded that the effort should be abandoned, and that psychologists should accept a moral responsibility to support particular sides in these controversies (e.g., Haan, 1982; Larsen, 1986). Other colleagues, however, have made valiant efforts to tease apart the relative importance of factual and value disagreements, and have carefully avoided becoming partisans of one side or another in situations calling for their professional expertise.

There is, for instance, an impressive social science literature on assessing the
risks of technological innovation (Fischhoff, Lichtenstein, Slovic, Derby, & Keeney, 1981). This work explores different procedures for deciding how much gain (in, for example, energy efficiency, agricultural productivity, accessibility of a nutritious and varied diet, or industrial efficiency) is worth how much risk (here, as a result of the use of nuclear power generators, recombinant DNA, food additives, and fossil fuels).

The authors present a series of guidelines that we find very persuasive. They emphasize the complex, situation-specific nature of the problems and the very low probability of finding a single all-purpose solution; the limitations of the knowledge base and the concomitant importance of political and value considerations; and the crucial role of problem definition in the process of seeking solutions. They also show the need to monitor and improve the decision-making process and the requirement of being explicit and honest about all of the above (see also Slovic, 1987). Our own view of the wide range of social advocacy issues is that psychologists would do well to follow these recommendations regardless of topic.

An exemplary study by Hammond and Adelman (1976) tried to isolate the factual and value components of a policy controversy. The debate was the choice of appropriate ammunition to be used by the Denver Police Department; it involved a seemingly hopeless tangle of facts and values. In helping to resolve the controversy, Hammond and Adelman succeeded in separating technical issues such as the relative characteristics and probable effects of various types of ammunition on shooting outcomes from the importance of these outcomes. The outcomes were factual issues such as the bullet’s ability immediately to incapacitate its target versus the likelihood that it might pass through the target and ricochet or hit a bystander. These factors were differentiated from value judgments about, for example, the relative importance of immediate stopping power versus risk to bystanders.

Technical (ballistics) experts were asked to evaluate the technical issues. Community leaders were considered to be the relevant experts on the social values attached to the issue by their own constituencies and were given the task of assessing the value components. Both groups worked in the absence of information from the other.

The result was a generally acceptable solution, the choice of a bullet that represented the best combination of high stopping ability with low secondary risk. Significantly, the researchers themselves made neither technical nor value judgments. Their role was to operationalize the judgments of the two groups of experts.

This kind of disaggregating procedure is rare in social science research, and the success of Hammond and Adelman may well be difficult to replicate in highly polarized political environments. For example, the Colorado decision makers were willing to give equal weight to the different values involved. As Hammond and Adelman recognized, this was a prerequisite for a consensual solution and is probably not universally generalizable. We doubt, for example, that Likud (the present governing political party of Israel) and PLO participants in Kelman and Bloom’s (1973) Middle East conflict resolution workshops would agree to give equal weight to the issues of secure borders for Israel and the right to a Palestinian homeland. Similarly, in Colorado, agreement was obtained on what constituted technical expertise in ballistics and on a list of acceptable expert consultants, a prerequisite for separating the factual and value issues. We doubt that the Middle
East workshop participants would so easily agree on the composition of a consultant group on military and strategic issues. Trying to imagine Palestinian guerilla leader Abu Nidal and former Israeli defense minister Ariel Sharon coming to such an agreement illustrates the magnitude of the problem.

**Factual Controversies and Value Controversies**

In the sections that follow, we have selected a number of currently controversial social issues. Each case has engaged the attention of psychologists to a greater or lesser degree. In each case, prominent behavioral scientists have read the existing database as strongly implying the preferability of a particular policy decision that, if adopted, would have far-reaching, important effects. In each case, there are also colleagues who disagree with the view that any particular policy can be firmly based on the available scientific knowledge.

Disputes focus on both the acceptability of the available data as a foundation of policy and the value judgments made by colleagues in using those data as an advocacy tool. Although both types of disagreements probably exist in just about every policy debate, in some cases the value conflict is the center and crux of the disagreement. A particular policy can exalt some values as more important than others and sacrifice or at least compromise the latter to promote the former. In other areas, factual disagreements are paramount: whether the data being cited in support of particular policies are strong enough to be so used and further whether, regardless of their strength, they indeed imply the policy they are used to justify.

Going through the topics one by one, we find a distribution from debates in which the two sides generally agree on the facts but not on their policy implications (that is, where value conflicts define the opposing positions) to those where the two disagree about the facts (data conflicts). But traces of both appear in each case. and our own reading of the arguments identifies the following major themes and contradictions.

**International Relations**

1. The relative merits of simple and complex decision-making strategies is primarily a factual issue, with both psychological and political components. On the psychological level, complex information processing can exact costs that strongly affect its efficiency and probable success (Suedfeld, 1983, 1988; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1990; Tetlock, 1986, 1989). On the political side, the debate is about whether decisions reached through complex cognitive processes are necessarily more adaptive than those derived from simple cognitive strategies, or, rather, under what circumstances is either of these more adaptive. Analysts may disagree as to the complexity of the environment and, as a consequence, disagree as to how critical complexity of thought is to making effective policy decisions. For example, an analyst who subscribed to a unified, rational-actor model of Soviet foreign policy might have viewed the invasion of Afghanistan as only one in a series of planned gradual expansions of Soviet hegemony over neighboring countries. This interpretation calls for much less of a multidimensional assessment of the invasion of Afghanistan than would an analysis of Soviet behavior as the product of compet-
ing institutional political factions. Such disagreements derive not from psychological theory but from divergent factual assessments of the international scene.

Although value trade-offs can emerge in assessing the pros and cons of simple and complex decision-making procedures (e.g., the comparative hazards of exaggerating and underestimating pluralistic influences in Soviet foreign policy at different times in history), value disagreements are less salient. Decision-analysis technology often appears value-neutral, its function being to resolve a problem, not to judge moral appropriateness. Nonetheless, decision analysis clearly does raise moral issues. These are related to whether the decision analyst is a "hired gun" who would not have discriminated between advising the Nazi government on how best to maximize its territorial expansion in Europe without war prior to 1939 and advising the Kennedy administration on how to achieve the right mix of influence tactics to induce the Soviets to withdraw their missiles from Cuba in 1962.

2. A fairly evenly mixed case is that of nuclear deterrence. Factual concerns include the conditions under which, according to available data, threats or reassurances constitute the more effective way of influencing a competitor's behavior. Nonpsychological technical and political debates also abound, primarily about issues such as the nature of Soviet geopolitical intentions (Hough, 1985; Pipes, 1984), the possibility of limited nuclear war, the verifiability of arms control agreements (Policy Forum, 1987), the effects of particular weapons systems on international stability (Tetlock et al., 1991), and the extent and severity of a hypothetical "nuclear winter" (e.g., Marshall, 1987; Sagan, 1983/1984; Seitz, 1986).

There are two value questions. The more abstract of these concerns is whether nuclear deterrence can be ethical regardless of circumstances or outcomes. The other revolves around the acceptability of an error in one of two directions. One is failing to communicate adequate resolve to a potential aggressor, thus increasing the likelihood of being victimized by aggression: the other is failing to reassure an insecure adversary of one's own peaceful intentions, thus increasing the likelihood of a conflict spiral and an unnecessary and perhaps dangerous arms race. One frequently expressed value position is that, given the power of nuclear weapons, no increase in the latter risk is acceptable, regardless of effects on the former.

3. The extent of fear of nuclear war among children represents a mainly factual debate. One group of observers asserts that according to acceptable scientific evidence such fear is widespread, intense, and psychologically injurious among contemporary American youth; opponents argue that the evidence fails to demonstrate the validity of this claim.

Assuming that the traumatization of a generation of young citizens is highly undesirable, there are value implications. For example, if the pervasive fear of nuclear war were in fact reliably established, what weight should it be given in policy debates as opposed to the weight given to considerations of national security? What nuclear strategies (e.g., building an even stronger deterrent force, developing an effective technological defense by intensifying work on the Strategic Defense Initiative, negotiating arms control, or instituting immediate nuclear disarmament) would serve to reduce this fear? Or, in the absence of such a direct solution becoming immediately feasible, what educational policies (e.g., "peace" or "strength" curricula in the schools) should be developed (see, e.g., Dulby, 1986)?
Domestic Policy Issues

4. The affirmative action issue engages both kinds of argument, and very similar points are raised concerning these policies. The major factual disputes center around several topics. One is the current pervasiveness of racial and gender discrimination in the United States, specifically in the area of employment. Another is the degree to which underrepresentation of a particular demographic group in a particular occupational niche reflects past or current discrimination as opposed to the working of impersonal market forces and different patterns of preferences and aptitudes across groups.

Another set of factual questions is more complex. There is some doubt as to how much affirmative action programs as currently structured actually benefit those who need them. It has been charged, for instance, that affirmative action helps mostly people who are well educated, middle-class, and well adjusted to society. Members of this group who also happen to belong to protected categories benefit from the program: disadvantaged individuals, whether or not they belong to identified minorities (adolescent drop-outs in the inner city, the rural poor), may be too far out of the mainstream to gain much.

A more psychologically focused issue is the effect of such programs on their beneficiaries. Is there possible damage to self-esteem and aspiration level among individuals who are selected for employment, promotion, education, etc., on the basis of race or gender? Do they feel that they are "tokens" whose colleagues view them with resentment? What happens to those who, because of insufficient preparation or ability, are incapable of performing at the required level? What is the effect of all of this on people outside the protected groups in terms of racial or gender backlash?

Value arguments include the relative importance of the right of every person to obtain rewards in accordance with his or her merit, implying that no preference be given on any other criterion, versus the need to remedy past or current injustices to groups defined by extraneous characteristics and the importance of maximizing efficiency and productivity in a highly competitive international environment, a goal that could be endangered by affirmative action. Such interference may or may not lead to a possible loss in general economic well-being and progress (Schmidt & Hunter, 1981). Given that such a loss could in turn impair the domestic economy, leading to particularly severe impacts on the very same groups purportedly served by affirmative action policies, what probability of each outcome justifies any particular decision on the issue?

5. Arguments about censorship of pornography and of violent television shows are also fundamentally both factual and value arguments. Researchers in both areas disagree as to whether the investigations conducted to date have sufficient ecological validity to justify policy recommendations. The value debate is, first, whether a potential decrease in crimes against women (or in general social violence) justifies the infringement of First Amendment guarantees and, second, whether even a firmly established increase in the probability that a small percentage of viewers may commit such acts would justify the denial of access to the material for all potential users.

6. Gun control is primarily a factual issue: what, if any, laws concerning the possession of firearms would lead to a reduction in social violence? Disagreements are based on the different statistics cited, the rationalizations offered for findings
that are incongruent with the author's position, the choice of examples for argument by analogy, the "real" meaning of the Second Amendment to the Constitution, and the like. Only beyond this level do we get the weighing of trade-offs between individual freedoms and social dangers.

Criminal Justice

7. The death qualification of jurors may or may not lead reliably to increased probability of conviction, a factual question. How it is answered raises questions of value. To what extent should society be more averse to releasing the guilty than to convicting the innocent, given the many safeguards against the latter eventuality that are already built into the system? Thus, either answer to the factual question leads directly to the moral issue about the desirability of increasing (or decreasing) the conviction rate, with concomitant implications for the rights of the accused versus the rights of actual and potential victims.

8. In the use of the polygraph, the crucial question is consensually accepted to be the factual one: What proportions of false positives and false negatives are found when lie detectors are used? The value conflicts are the acceptability of various answers to the empirical question, the right of the individual to privacy and against self-incrimination, and the appropriateness of mechanical intrusions into what has traditionally been a human decision-making process.

9. Although the use of machinery is not involved in the case of eyewitness testimony, there is an analog in the debate over populist versus technocratic approaches to legal judgment. Historically, representative members of the community—jurors—are the triers of fact and decide for themselves the degree to which any evidence (including the testimony of an eyewitness) is credible. Whether psychological evidence on this issue should be allowed to influence the decision (especially given the authority of an expert witness) is a fundamental value question. Another is, again, society's willingness to accept incorrect convictions or incorrect acquittals. This is particularly relevant here, since psychologists giving direct (as opposed to rebuttal) evidence on eyewitness accuracy tend to question the validity of witness identifications. Thus, to the extent that their testimony is believed by the jury, it tends to increase the chances of acquittal. The empirical question, as to the ecological validity and general status of eyewitness accuracy research, seems to be less controversial as a body of convincingly rigorous studies emerges, but how applicable that literature is to a specific criminal case can certainly be argued.

10. Factual issues are at the heart of disagreements about the effects of long-term incarceration. The disputants address the extent to which life in prison is psychologically debilitating, either in extent (what proportion of prisoners is so affected?) or in degree (how badly debilitated are they?). Second, there is a debate about whether good (trouble-free) adjustment to the institution is a negative predictor of adjustment to life after release. Third, there is a vigorous dispute about the efficacy of programs designed to rehabilitate convicts and prepare them for life as law-abiding, productive citizens upon their discharge from prison. There are some value implications, although most people consider them secondary: If prison is debilitating, does the state have the right to use it anyway, to protect the rest of society? Does the state have the right to meddle with the convict's personality in
rehabilitation programs, or is confinement the only legitimate purpose of a prison sentence?

This completes the rapid overview of the policy controversies covered in this book. The reader will see the various arguments presented, in much more detail, in the various position papers.

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE SPSSI/APA RESOLUTIONS

Before going on, it might be interesting to take another look at the resolutions excerpted at the head of this chapter. Where do they fall along the distributions identified above? In addition to identifying factual and value issues, we will also consider a factor particularly germane to this class of statement: the relevance of the issue to psychology as a science and profession.

1. There is no scientific basis for the opinion that war is inevitable.

Although this is clearly a factual claim, it is a dubious one. There are, and there were at the time of the statement, competent and even eminent colleagues (including Sigmund Freud) who interpreted the evidence differently. Further, the evidence against the proposition is certainly no better than the evidence for it. Thus, the SPSSI resolution is at best one-sided (telling some of the truth, but not all of it), and presumably heavily motivated by the value system of its promulgators.

2. Readmission of Israel to UNESCO.

This is completely value-based, and with tenuous relevance to any central interest of APA.

3. Discrimination against men in the context of child-rearing is scientifically baseless.

The theoretical and empirical issues in gender-related child-rearing merit more consideration than the APA's cursory dismissal gives them. Leaving aside the values obviously supported by the statement, a more balanced commentary on the scientific aspects would have been appropriate.

4. Urging a nuclear freeze.

Psychologists can hardly claim expertise on this extremely broad issue, which involves a complex mixture of geopolitical, military, technological, economic, and ideological factors. The resolution is a simplistic value statement in an area where the professional standing of psychologists is at best debatable.

5. Creationism should not be required in the public school curriculum.
Although the data for rejecting creationism as a scientific theory is overwhelming, it is only marginally psychological. We disagree between ourselves on this resolution. Suedfeld, favoring stricter limits on advocacy involvement by scientific organizations, feels that it is only remotely relevant to APA and that our Council should have left it alone, whereas Tetlock argues that it directly affects science and therefore psychology. Tetlock further maintains that cases of religion masquerading as science are just as deserving of condemnation as instances of politics masquerading as science; Suedfeld does not have a strong objection to that argument, but thinks that the APA is not in a very strong position for issuing censures against the first kind of masquerade given its own predilection for the second.


The data on this one seem fairly persuasive, the resolution gives due acknowledgment of Constitutional rights, and the statement seems both better grounded and better balanced than many.

7. Making boxing illegal.

The conclusion, based upon the neurological damage that can be incurred by boxers, is reasonable and well-founded in data. However, since boxers engage in the sport voluntarily, taking a paternalistic stand in favor of legal prohibition introduces a political (nonempirical) complication.

So as not to criticize only the major U.S. organizations, let us now add a resolution endorsed by the Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association ("AGM votes . . . ;" 1987):

Whereas: use of the death penalty: is against our professional, ethical, and scientific values; and whereas: in our scientific judgment studies of the effects of capital punishment on homicide rates have shown no evidence whatsoever for deterrence: be it resolved that: the membership of the Canadian Psychological Association opposes the reinstatement of the death penalty in Canada.

This resolution, which passed by a vote of 139:7:7, is certainly as egregious an example as any above. It fails our criteria on just about every count. In short, the resolution fails to spell out its own value bases, eliminates by fiat a real controversy in the scientific literature, and sets up only a "straw man" as the opposing viewpoint.

To begin with, approximately 4.6% of the membership voted against the resolution, which was then promulgated in the name of the Association.

Even if we overlook the failure to specify the professional and ethical values violated by the death penalty, what, one wonders, are the relevant scientific values? A quotation from some handbook of the three types of values might have clarified the issue.

It is doubtful that each of the 139 pro-resolution members had read the scientific literature carefully enough to have a scientific judgment on the issue. To say that there is "no evidence whatsoever" favoring deterrence is simply untrue. Although not dominant, such evidence could indeed be found in the literature (cf. Ehrlich, 1982; Forst, 1983).
Even if we accept the assertion, is deterrence the only argument that needs to be considered? In fact, one could argue that to execute some people in order to deter others would itself violate professional and ethical values, if not scientific ones. The resolution ignores a range of arguments, both factual (e.g., capital punishment would protect potential future victims by executing people who have already shown themselves capable of murder or other heinous crimes) and value-based (e.g., many religious and moral codes support the view that at least under some circumstances the unlawful taking of a human life can be expiated only by losing one’s own).

We have tried hard not to allow our agreement or disagreement with the resolutions to bias our judgments of their empirical or moral foundations and appropriateness. In fact, although each of us disagrees with some of the resolutions (not necessarily the same ones), we tend to have high agreement on the extent to which databases and value systems are prominent in the pedigree of each.

It appears that the APA has become somewhat more cautious or selective about the public positions that it is willing to take in political and social controversies, perhaps because of the internal problems caused by its earlier liberties. The urgings of some groups or individuals within the Association that certain statements be made (e.g., on political situations in other countries, on the causal roots of violent behavior) have been declined. We applaud this change, regardless of whether we agree with the positions being (or not being) taken.

CONCLUSIONS

Before going on to the chapters reviewing the various advocacy disputes in detail, we once again state our conclusions and recommendations:

Psychologists should be scrupulously careful to differentiate their participation in policy debates as interested citizens or advocates from participation as behavioral scientists. We agree with Fischhoff et al. (1981), who maintain that careful differentiation here is an integral part of good mental hygiene.

The normative guidelines for these two roles differ significantly. Participation as a behavioral scientist calls for making explicit the distinction between facts and values; for stating one’s values clearly; and, when discussing the facts, for presenting all of the relevant evidence (including its limits, gaps, and contradictions). These are themselves policy-advocating suggestions. Further, our position is controversial among social scientists, resting (as do other such positions) on both factual claims and moral (value) assumptions. Adopting George Kelly’s recommendation of reflexivity, let us analyze the recommendation in the same way we analyze the policy controversies that follow. Let us look separately at factual and value issues.

One factual question is the extent to which policies derived from psychological data are likely to be “better” than those developed without reference, or even in contradiction, to such data. This is a crucial question. Given the limitations of psychological knowledge and the even greater problems, already discussed, of extrapolating from such knowledge to macro-level policies, we cannot give a simple answer. However, although we feel it wise to move cautiously, we certainly do not dismiss the view that psychological data can contribute, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the issue, to the development of good policies. The qualifications in that statement identify important areas for research.
Second, even if we posit that the influence of psychologists on policy decisions is generally desirable, is that influence likely to be maximized by the cautious stance we recommend for behavioral scientists acting in role, or rather by a more unqualified advocacy position? The literature on one-sided versus two-sided arguments, and other research on communications and persuasion, may be relevant here.

Third, what is the effect of the two approaches likely to be, in the short and long term, internally (i.e., the reactions of our colleagues and members of our professional organizations) and externally (on the general public and its various segments)? There are no data available on this issue aside from anecdotal comments.

The value questions include whether scientists have a special obligation to be open and self-critical about their own positions in policy debates, even if this reduces their influence. We think that the ethics of psychology, both as explicitly written and as implicitly handed down across generations of scientists, dictate an affirmative answer. Is complete disclosure a basic and general ideal of science? We think so. Our position, obviously, is that due admission of uncertainty is definitely more honest and probably more persuasive in the long term. Such an approach is also less likely to invite hostility from those who may at some point discover that policies based on our advice were not satisfactory.

Last, these and the previous questions pose the critical one: How much of their integrity as scientists are psychologists, individually and collectively, willing to trade off to increase their immediate influence as policy advocates?

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