

Introduction

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This Special Issue focuses on the various forms and formers of social power and on the various meanings and means of planned social change.

Change is characteristic of all social systems, all societies and organizations. In the contemporary world, its processes and effects have been vastly accelerated: What once were stable qualities of our society are to be relied on no more. Some of the most dramatic forms of recent planned social change include: the redistribution of resources; alteration of role relationships and the status systems that accompany them; reduction of racism, sexism, and elitism in institutional processes and structures; and the development of alternative structures of social life. These social changes help create personal changes in status and mobility, self-concept, skills, and problem-solving behavior. Though important matters in themselves (and as inputs to social change), we will not focus on personal change in this Special Issue.

Power, too, is ubiquitous; it exists in all human relationships and in the operations of all social systems. It affects us personally, as in the relations between parent and child; and it affects us socially, as in the relationship between the courts and racism. The exercise of social and personal power involves and affects all of us constantly.

Not only does power affect us, it is one of the primary driving and directing forces in human society. It is driving, in that, as Bertrand Russell (1938) suggested, "The fundamental concept in social science is Power in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics." It is directional, in that its exercise is guided by the pursuit of interests, goals, and ideals. The mobilization and application of that power will determine the future of social systems.

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THE ROLES OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN STUDYING POWER AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Ideas and beliefs about social systems and about power radically affect the character of life in a society. People's notions of justice, equality, liberty, individual rights, collective rewards, and so forth all influence the kinds of changes they will and will not support, and the kinds of power they will exercise or permit to be exercised. Similarly, people's views on appropriate or effective forms and procedures for institutions and formal or informal groupings also influence their conceptions of the good life, the good society, and good uses of power.

One of the most important functions of ideas, of myths, and methods of gathering data is to explain the nature of the world, including the social organization of human life. So it is that archaeological evidence from even the most ancient and primitive groups shows that power holders of all periods were supported by some kind of ideology. Some set of beliefs about social reality always exists to justify and perpetuate the privileged position of power holders, whether it is a matter of the divine right of kings, the inherent power of the Electorate, the greater natural intelligence of elites, the special expertise of State Advisers.¹

In early human societies, the shaman, priest, or sage created and transmitted the prevailing ideas and belief systems that explained their respective worlds, and they stood side by side with the power holders in their society. So it is in the modern world, where it is scientists now who explain the world and the workings of its social institutions. For the most part, American social science explains modern society in ways that conform to and support the interests of groups in power. Scientists are the priestly class in modern society.

Many kinds of power can be used to implement or to alter ruling ideas and social structures. In this issue of *JABS* we have focused on the belief systems of social science, and the social change technologies derived therefrom, as important sources of power in modern society; and we have emphasized a need to examine the roles and values of social scientists as creators, organizers, and disseminators of social knowledge and beliefs

¹ Of course no social system, in any age, is monolithic. Competitive ideologies always exist even when they are boldly suppressed. So within any state there have been and are alternate utopias and competing images of the rights to exercise control of others. A description of competing ideologies in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s can be found in Dolbeare and Dolbeare (1971).

about social systems, power, and change. Similarly, the goals and activities of practitioners of social change are examined in terms of their partisan acts, which maintain or transform the power of those whom they serve.

The value stance taken by the articles in this Special Issue is diverse, but not as diverse as American society, and probably not even as diverse as would be found in a representative spectrum of applied social scientists. Most papers express a concern for greater attention to issues of social equality and justice. Racism, sexism, age and class discrimination are typically opposed; few authors argue for changes that increase elitist (individual or collective) control of American life. This may be good or bad, but it does represent our own biases, which we feel you should know at the outset.

We have stated here that all social change is based upon preferred social values; it is always a partisan endeavor: what differs is whose interests and what values are being pursued or advocated or negotiated. The quest for neutrality is illusory, and in actual practice must serve unstated priorities. From this perspective it would be neater, although not always strategically wise, for scientists engaged in change to state their preferences openly. Then we could ask two things of each other, requirements related to altered traditional meanings of the term *objectivity*: (1) carefulness—carefulness in analysis and action, so we are sufficiently sure of the accuracy of our information, the integrity and consistency of our convictions, and the fairness of our images and treatment of others; and (2) openness about the values we hold and the directions we advocate.

So here we are. The authors of this Special Issue are quite diverse in the roles they usually play in social change processes. All go beyond the traditional academic commitment to action-free scholarship and engage directly and transactionally with their subject, their clients and constituencies, their world. But some are primarily theorists, engaged in conceptualizing the state of their world and efforts to change it. Others are strategic thinkers, engaged primarily in helping partisans or managers think through and imagine alternative ways of exercising power in the pursuit of favored ends. Still others are consultants, working as professional or peer advisers to groups championing social change. And some are front-line workers, by choice or design operating at the margin, directly engaged in manipulating power to change individual and social systems.

THE ARTICLES INCLUDED

Several articles in this issue are broadly *diagnostic* or *analytic* in attending to specific aspects of society or to major institutional arenas. Wilson's view of American cultural development is one example, and both Levin and Reiff examine the relationships of major institutions to larger political and ideological issues. Jamieson and Thomas focus their broad analytic concern on a smaller interactional arena—the American classroom.

Several other papers *compare change strategies and tactics*. Crowfoot and Chesler compare three approaches to planned social change. Polk undertakes a similar comparative analysis of four meta-strategies, although her analysis focuses on the particular set of issues surrounding the oppression of women. Bryan also compares several approaches to social change, but within the arena of environmental problems, an arena he visualizes as affecting fundamental problems of social justice.

Several papers *describe specific change programs*. Kinkade discusses the power of community governance within alternative living communities. The pungency of her descriptions easily transports the designs she discusses from communal movements to a concern with both human growth and more effective decision-making systems, while Gardner articulates a similar problem, power diffusion in traditional municipal governments. Narrower areas of concern are evident in Robin's paper on innovation and reform in the judicial system and Crockett's report of changes generated by the entrance of black judges into urban courtrooms. Sanchez' report on the judicial process from the other side describes the use of litigation to counter racism and to attain more equal educational opportunities for Latinos, and Kaimowitz discusses youth movement tactics to counter adult chauvinism. Hinsberg describes ways voluntary organizations can influence the legislative process—in this case, with the church in a central role.

And what of *responses to change efforts*? Can those of us who have been at the front remember how we were treated? O'Day clarifies the tactics which organizations can use in response to reform efforts. Sanchez, Gardner, and Kinkade present other illustrations of the "bite-back" power of organizations and institutions in frustrating change efforts.

Authors' targets of analysis or change also differ. Bryan, Wilson, and Levin focus on American society as such. Major institutions are considered by Crockett, Robin, Gardner, Sanchez, Levin, and Reiff. Organizations of less than institutional complexity, or in less than their full

differentiation, gain the attention of Kaimowitz, Jamieson and Thomas, and O'Day. Finally, movement groups themselves—women's groups, countercultural groups, and planned change movement groups—are analyzed by Polk, Kinkade, and Crowfoot and Chesler.

Any series of papers dealing with power must inquire into the whys and hows of personal and institutional response. Why do people cooperate, collaborate, join efforts with other people? Why do people do what they are told? Why do people do what others expect them to do without being told? Why do people refuse to do what they are told, or refuse to do it at the time, place, or in the manner they are told? Why do people fight, compete, debate with one another? How do institutions effect the coordination of goals and division of labor in a diverse population? How do institutions alter their relations with the environment?

Power relationships require for their existence "empowering responses" on the part of the actors and organizations involved, usually institutionalized into structures, norms, roles, and rules of the game. What are the sources of that "empowerment"?

On one axis of the chart below we have listed several kinds of social power and have identified the articles that illustrate each; on the other axis, we have identified their targets. Perhaps the reader will find it helpful to orient himself or herself by considering the juxtapositions of these axes.

Social Power Axes

KINDS OF POWER	TARGETS OF ANALYSIS			
	Society	Major Institutions	Organizations	Change Movements
<i>Expert</i>	Introduction	Robin Reiff	Jamieson & Thomas Sanchez	Crowfoot & Chesler Robin Kinkade
<i>Cultural</i>	Wilson	Reiff Hinsberg	Hinsberg	Kinkade Polk
<i>Polity</i>	Levin Bryan	Levin Sanchez Crockett Gardner	O'Day Jamieson & Thomas	Polk Hinsberg Crowfoot & Chesler
<i>Mobilization of Oppressed</i>	Bryan Wilson Polk	Sanchez	Kaimowitz	Polk Sanchez Kaimowitz

Reiff is concerned with the control of expertise in establishing and maintaining professionalism, and Robin sees information as a key input to changing judicial and police procedures. In a special way, Kinkade also refers to the tendency to use people who can "make the best decisions" as community planners and governors. Education and information systems are particularly important institutional sources of this kind of power.

Cultural power, as expressed in moral and ideological systems, is considered by Wilson and Hinsberg. Here cultural values, of a broad societal or—in Hinsberg's case—subsocietal and institutional character, are major influencers of behavior. Cultural myths are clearly part of this system, as delineated in Wilson's discussion of racism. Less clearly described but suggested by both Reiff and Wilson, and emphasized by Crowfoot and Chesler and by Polk as well, is the tremendous influence available when systems of expertise join cultural myths or value systems. It is here that the social sciences probably have their greatest current impact.

The power source of the legitimate polity, the official authority system, is vitally important in our heavily institutionalized and bureaucratized society. Levin discusses this aspect of social power arrangements in broad form, and Bryan attends to its influence in the behavior of major corporate systems in the environmental arena. Gardner and O'Day also describe various institutional and organizational forms of legitimate political and economic authority, to both support and resist changes. Jamieson and Thomas investigate a number of interactional meanings of social power within the framework of legitimate office and authority. A separable yet related form of official authority lies in the more coercive realm of judicial or legislative action. Both Sanchez and Crockett discuss change efforts relying upon the courts' ability to coerce certain kinds of institutional responses from school systems, police agencies, and judicial mechanisms themselves. Hinsberg describes an effort to influence legislative action; Crowfoot and Chesler, and Polk discuss modes of influencing key decision-makers in governmental roles.

The building of new institutional forms of power based on the mobilization of oppressed groups is best described by Bryan and Kaimowitz. Also alluded to by Wilson, Polk, Sanchez, and Crowfoot and Chesler, these papers deal with organizing the unorganized and with generating influence by virtue of either numbers or access to key economic or social resources.

WHAT WE MISS

In editing this issue of the *Journal*, we sought a series of analyses that reviewed many aspects of American life and many approaches to the use of power for social change. We know, however, that there are several gaping holes. One is the American economic system and the power of capitalism as an ideology as well as its embodiment in corporate forms. The national and international implications of these economic and political systems are enormous, as is their ability to employ vast numbers of planned change experts to aid them. Another area sorely lacking in analysis here is the American university system, which generates the belief systems and trains the change agents of a science-conscious society.² As a major producer of knowledge and as myth-maker, its economic and normative effects on communities and individuals are great, in spite of its dependence on the polity and economy for its existence. As the home base for many social scientists, applied and nonapplied, it should be the first place to look at in seeking to understand our own role and influence.

Undoubtedly there are other gaps, but these are the ones whose omission we felt most strongly. We hope other issues of the *Journal* will continue to pick up the pieces left here, and will continue to examine directly the political roles, links, and implications of planned social change.

We hope this Special Issue has been able to do one of two things for its readers: (1) to provide alternative answers or roads to answers for those of us who seek resolution of these dilemmas; (2) to create new dilemmas out of old certainties for those of us too sure, or too busy, or too captive to have foundered upon them.

REFERENCES

- Dolbeare, K., & Dolbeare, P. *American ideologies: The competing political beliefs of the 1970's*. Chicago: Markham, 1971.
- Russell, B. *Power: A new social analysis*. New York: Norton, 1938. P. 12.

² The very "science consciousness" of a society reflects a stabilizing or conservative bias in its approach to change. Reliance on *et certibus parebus* and upon the need for proof reflects an epistemology fraught with hesitancy and caution. And, of course, hesitancy and caution on the part of change-makers will suit the maintenance of the status quo.