

On academic colonialism: the case of U.S.-Latin American Studies

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Introduction

The issue of academic colonialism in U.S.-Latin American Studies has been a lively one. This is not only due to the international scandal caused by the Camelot affair in 1965.¹ The problem had already been present for a considerably longer period of time and Camelot only served to make manifest many of the fears, frustrations and angers over U.S. academic involvement, the Latin American scholarly community had felt for quite a while.

In this essay we will discuss some of the dimensions the phenomenon of academic colonialism has taken in U.S.-Latin American Studies. We will add the response to the issue by individual U.S. scholars and by some of the agencies, foundations, and other organizations involved in social science research and (university) institution-building — which often go together — in Latin America. Where possible we will try to formulate some tentative explanations of the phenomena encountered.

If we write about 'Latin America' we do not mean to suggest the existence of a homogeneous social and cultural unit. There is however a common basis sufficient to justify our speaking in general terms, also where it concerns the phenomenon of academic colonialism.²

If we devote a great deal of attention to a side of U.S. social science research in Latin America that increasingly has drawn criticism from the Latin American scholarly community and others, we do not try to forget its achievements. Some of the best studies on Latin America were written by U.S. scholars, a fact readily acknowledged by Latin Americans.

For the purpose of this essay we will adhere to Galtung's definition of academic (or 'scientific') colonialism: 'a process whereby the center of gravity for the acquisition of knowledge about the nation is located outside the nation itself.'³ In limiting ourselves to the phenomenon of academic colonialism we should not forget that it manifests itself against the background of a powerful economic, political and cultural presence of the U.S. in many Latin American nations. Some of them are quite dependent on the U.S. and the relationship often has colonialistic, exploitative overtones. This factor relates to academic colonialism where it has instigated U.S. research and where it has provoked and further stimulated the Latin American response.

Some manifestations of academic colonialism

The phenomenon of academic colonialism generally manifests itself in:⁴

¹ cf. Irving Louis Horowitz, ed., *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship between Social Science and Practical Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967, passim.

² cf. Darcy Ribeiro, 'Universities and Social Development', in: S. M. Lipset and Aldo Solari, eds., *Elites in Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 343.

³ Johan Galtung, 'After Camelot', in Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 296 ff.

- the claim by the colonizer of unlimited access to any kind of data available in the colony;
- the view of the colony as primarily a producer of raw data which are to be exported to the home country of the colonizer and further developed there;
- the 'brain drain' of promising scholars from the colony who either stay in the new country or are re-imported as research bureaucrats who have internalized theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches that are part of the 'Western' experience and whose applicability to the nation's problems is not without debate. This subtle process of adoption of what the colonizing country offers as 'modern social science' can be observed with other scholars in the colony as well where the authority of the scientific elite of the colonizing nation is voluntary and a-critically accepted;⁵
- the one-sided accumulation of knowledge about the colony in the hands of the colonizer, knowledge that potentially could be instrumental to the purposes of government, business of industry of the colonizing nation, or that in its politico-ideological implications could have the tendency to rationalize, justify and perpetuate colonialistic relationships.

*Unlimited access to data in the colony*⁶

U.S. social science research 'discovered' Latin America at the end of the fifties with the increasing political relevance of the area after the Cuban Revolution and the opportunities the area appeared to offer as a laboratory where theories and hypotheses on social change could be tested out.⁷ The term 'laboratory' innocently used by Wagley, well expresses what this dimension of academic colonialism alludes to. U.S. social scientists have since 1959 increasingly claimed Latin American countries as places where hypotheses and theories conveniently could be tested out, the Latin American subjects unwittingly being used in research that, as local scholars felt, did not even indirectly serve their interests. Besides these studies we find the research with strong political and/or economic overtones directly or indirectly serving U.S. Government, business or industry objectives and culminating in the Camelot venture, but certainly not disappeared after its abortion.

Latin American scholars often find themselves in opposition to the topics of U.S. social science. Especially in recent years they tend to focus on problems surrounding development and dependence in the search for solutions to pressing

⁵ a situation with slight differences also existing in the natural sciences, cf. Oscar A. Varsavsky, *El Colonialismo Cultural en las Ciencias Naturales*. serie III, ensayos y exposiciones no. 1, CENDES, Universidad Central de Venezuela, 1966.

⁶ for an example of the attitude behind this dimension of academic colonialism, cf. Robert E. Ward, ed., *Studying Politics Abroad: Field Research in the Developing Areas*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964, a publication sponsored by the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council, especially Ward's contribution (cf. p. 63 ff.).

⁷ Charles Wagley, ed., *Social Science Research on Latin America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, pp. 13-14.

local economic, social or political problems.⁸ It is clear that they are bound to be negatively oriented toward research that primarily seems to serve the researcher's own pay, promotion and prestige in a foreign academic environment.

The colony as a producer of raw social science data

A discussion of this dimension of academic colonialism figures heavily in a study of U.S. social science research in Latin America, carried out in 1968 under the auspices of the Latin American Studies Association.⁹

Guatemala is a case in point as far as the exploitative aspects of U.S. social science research abroad is concerned. It also is a nation where U.S. economic interests are powerful, having a firm grip on the nation's economy which is totally dependent on the U.S. both as an export market and an import supplier. Except for perhaps Panamá, there is not an other country in Latin America where U.S. influence is so strong and pervasive.¹⁰ Blair concludes his study of U.S. social science research in Guatemala by noting that U.S. social scientists appear to view the Guatemalan situation primarily as a convenient place for gathering data which, through publication in the U.S., will favorably affect their prestige and chances for promotion. They are hardly motivated by a concern for the problems of the host country. Blair speaks of Guatemalans being used as 'hired hands' in gathering data which then are 'exported' to the U.S. for processing, analysis and publication. Hardly ever did a Guatemalan scholar figure as professional collaborator. The U.S. researcher often does not make a commitment to send either a copy of the data or the final product derived from them back to the host country. In case they do send in the publication, it is mostly written in a language (English) not readily accessible to anybody who might have been potentially interested. U.S. social science research appears to local scholars as uncoordinated, making excessive claims on the time and effort of the limited number of local informants, duplicating studies while neglecting what they considered vital problem areas. The attitude of the U.S. researchers themselves is often perceived as disdainful, arrogant, cultivating hierarchical relations in an area requiring the equalitarian atmosphere of fellow-scholars.

The case of Chile¹¹ appears somewhat different although here also the U.S. research effort has been rather intense. Differences may be ascribed to the different nature of the general U.S. presence in the country and also to the more

⁸ Richard N. Adams, ed., *Responsibilities of the Foreign Scholar to the Local Scholarly Community: Studies of U.S. Research in Guatemala, Chile and Paraguay* by Calvin P. Blair, Richard P. Schaedel and James H. Street. The Council on Educational Cooperation with Latin America, Education and World Affairs and Latin American Studies Association, 1969, p. 6 ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*, passim.

¹⁰ Blair in Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹¹ Schaedel in Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

advanced state of Chilean social science research. Yet, the persistent irritation of local scholars who feel themselves regarded as objects of study rather than as full-scale collaborators of U.S. social scientists in a joint project from which they might expect some payoff, is also to be noted here. The average U.S. researcher seems relatively unconcerned about the effects of his studies in Chile, the productivity of his research in the form of articles or books is rather high but seems primarily intended to satisfy U.S. career requirements. This last remark suggests an important factor behind the dimension of academic colonialism we are here discussing. Well-known types of the Latin American research scene like the graduate student who has to produce a dissertation that will please his doctoral committee, or the career-oriented assistant of associate professor in a hurry to get a publication 'on the record' in a small amount of time with help of a modest grant, are in most cases not likely to produce significant contributions to the effort of Chilean social scientists to formulate some answers to pressing national problems. This phenomenon has a link with some aspects of the structure and functioning of the U.S. academic system, we shortly want to elaborate. The academic system in the U.S. is scaled by rank and salary differences and upward mobility through the academic hierarchy is secured by meeting certain demands. Especially at the prestige institutions the individual faculty member is under strong pressure to conform to the demands with regard to his productivity. These pressures are manifold, not always that subtle, and range from differential assignment of teaching loads to differential rewards in salary and promotion. 'Publish or perish' has become a hard reality for all those scholars who aspire to permanent positions in the universities. Moreover any additional gain in prestige or advancement through the hierarchy can only be secured through research productivity and scholarly publication.¹² The prevalence of a quantity criterion in judging academic performance and the resulting urge to produce present with career-oriented academicians reinforce the tendencies toward the kind of research that has drawn so much criticism from the Latin American scholarly community. These factors do in general not encourage full-scale collaboration with local scholars in all stages of the organization of a project and the analysis and publication of the data. They tend to lead to a selection of problems which are located in the mainstream of present U.S. social science research interests (which is also where the grants are) and which have a high probability of publication, publication that is to say in the journals that pay off in prestige and promotion. These are U.S. journals and not those of the country the research was done. A different approach which would provide for a collaboration with local scholars in the phases of problem selection, research design, actual field work, analysis and publication and which also would result in a longer stay in the Latin

¹² cf. Neal Gross, 'Organizational Lag in American Universities', in: *Harvard Educational Review*, 33, Winter 1963, p. 63.

American country that the casual summer or the one or two semesters, might be damaging to the career pattern of the U.S. scholar. Unless the approach were a part of a formal program of research collaboration between a U.S. and a Latin American institution, the U.S. scholar might in this way also jeopardize his future efforts to secure research grants, a risk not many may be willing to take. Again, these factors are very much a part of U.S. university practice and hard to change. Most researchers do follow the conformist pattern which, as we have indicated, has colonizing implications in the case of Latin America.

The co-ordination of social science between colony and colonizer

The problem of the 'brain drain' and the adoption of 'Western' models, theoretical perspectives and methodologies by individual Latin American social scientists, is more difficult to handle. The complaint often implies evil intent on the part of the colonizer¹³, resistance can also be noted against the politico-ideological implications of the model of social change underlying the university-institution building effort of U.S. agencies and foundations to which the student and scholar exchange programs relate.¹⁴

The claims that U.S. agency and foundation exchange programs are carefully designed and executed in order to have a maximum effect on selected Latin American universities already oriented toward the U.S. model, has a high degree of truth.¹⁵ It is at the same time however rather difficult to evaluate the effects of these programs. Selection of candidates for exchange is partly a random affair, partly a process of conscious selection of individuals leaning toward certain U.S. desired university reforms, partly also a means for shipping 'difficult' or 'ineffective' faculty leaders out of the country.¹⁶

It is not clear if the selected individuals in the course of their exchange programs indeed are converted into academicians and experts who, once back in their home country, will be sensitive to U.S. values and be more 'cooperative' toward U.S. development goals and technical assistance, as a U.S. government report claims.¹⁷ We must admit, as we often do in sociology, that we lack information on this process taking into account variables like the attitudinal and cognitive changes

¹³ cf. Luis Alberto Sánchez, 'Aspectos de las Universidades Norte-americanas Validos en las Latinoamericanas', paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition, the U.S. Presence in Latin America*, University of Florida, February, 1970.

¹⁴ Raúl Urzúa, 'Fundaciones y Universidad: el Punto de Vista Latinoamericana', paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition, op. cit.*, p. 10 ff.

¹⁵ Robert F. Arnove, 'Promoters of the U.S. Model in Latin American Universities: International Exchange Programs and the Peace Corps', Paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition, op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

conference *Universities in Transition, op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ cited by Frank M. Tiller, 'The Presence of the United States in Latin American Universities: the Viewpoint of the United States Government', paper presented at the

of the student or scholar in his foreign university setting, his role identifications, the definition of academic, scholarly careers in the home country, the opportunity structure there, etc.¹⁸ It appears that we only might be able to speak of a successful program (on U.S. terms) in case of a very carefully structured process, which very seldom will be the case if only because a considerable number of the variables mentioned above is beyond control of the U.S. agency or foundation. As far as the academic aspects are concerned, we may assume that if the student makes a successful adaptation to U.S. academic life and is firmly committed to a scholarly or academic career it will be hard to ignore or to doubt seriously the theoretical perspectives, methodological orientations and commitment to the study of certain problem areas that will be transmitted to him as 'modern sociology'. We may also assume however that this latter process could have taken place in his home institution as well. The process of 'Americanization' of world social science has also had its effects in Latin America, in spite of some misgivings we might have about it.¹⁹

During the academic year 1968-1969 some 23,000 students, of whom about 30 per cent had graduate or professional degree status, and 700 teachers from Latin American and Caribbean countries were on educational assignment in the U.S.²⁰ The real magnitude of the 'brain drain', e.g. those scholars who do not return to their home country after termination of their studies in the U.S., is not known. If it would occur on a substantial scale, it would seem to defeat one of the primary objectives of the exchange program we alluded to before.

The dependence on the U.S. in the definition of what has to be considered 'proper' social science has recently met more and more resistance.²¹ The problem of the applicability of foreign models and methodologies is of course a manifestation of the deeper underlying debate between the neo-positivist approach — so predominant in U.S. social science — and its adversaries on the necessity of intercultural generalization culminating in the formulation of social 'laws', versus the importance of the historical and cultural specificity of a society or culture-area in determining the face of local social science. The discussion however acquires additional meaning where the issue of academic colonialism plays in a region struggling with problems of economic, political and cultural dependence.

¹⁸ cf. Arnove, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹⁹ cf. William Petersen, 'Some Animadversions on the Americanization of World Sociology', in: *Mens en Maatschappij*, 40, 6, 1965, pp. 456-467.

²⁰ Arnove, *op. cit.*, p. 7; Tiller, *op. cit.*, p. 4 ff.

²¹ cf. Urzúa, *op. cit.*, p. 22; Orlando Fals Borda, *Ciencia Propia y Colonialismo Intelectual*. México, Editorial Nuestro Tiempo, 1970, *passim*. This reaction may in individual cases, as Franco notes, sometimes exhibit the ambivalence of any authority-dependency relationship: rejection of what is viewed as 'U.S. social science' together with respect for U.S. academic titles and ambitions for study at U.S. universities, cf. Augusto Franco, 'El Gobierno de Los Estados Unidos y las Universidades Latino-americanas', paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Fals Borda advocates instituting a 'subversive sociology': a sociology operating with research priorities oriented on the acquisition of knowledge instrumental to efforts to radically change the societal order. A sociology which is not to resort to complacent provincialism, which is not to loose contact with the general development of social science, while at the same time however dedicating itself vigorously to the study of Latin American social reality in the search for some answers to its pressing problems. With Fals Borda we can find a combination of the elements which at various times during the last decade figured in the call for a re-orientation of sociological analysis, such as: a focus on the dynamics of society using a conflict theoretical perspective, an orientation of social science research on what can be defined as the central problems of society, a commitment of the individual social scientist to radical social change, the search for alternatives to the neo-positivist approach in social science methodology.

Fals Borda advocates a course of action whereby graduate schools are established in Latin American nations which will design in complete autonomy the social scientific apparatus that can be committed to the attack on the social problems of the area, and which will stimulate the development of a 'new consciousness' with regard to Latin American social reality among the students. This approach would in most cases interfere with present intent and practice of university-institution building efforts by U.S. agencies and foundations.

*The accumulation of social science research data as a power dimension
in U.S.-Latin American relations*

Within the realm of U.S.-Latin American academic relations the acquisition of knowledge has been primarily a one-way process. Over the years a mass of research data on most Latin American nations has been accumulated in U.S. institutions of which a substantial amount is difficultly accessible or not accessible at all for the scholars of the respective nations themselves. In the case of U.S.-Latin American relations it is not only the social-psychological consequences of this one-way process, as mentioned by Galtung, which count: e.g. the irritation about the fact that non-nationals render the important contributions to the self-image of the nation. Far more important, in my opinion, are the implications for international power relations. The research material on Latin America that has been accumulated by U.S. projects is potentially at the disposal of Government, business and industry — unless specific conditions were stipulated by the data-giver prohibiting such use — and in so far as the data have political or economic significance they thereby could become a factor contributing to the persistence of the existing patterns of economic and political domination.

Especially agency-sponsored research is by no means neutral in its attitude toward research and its results. They have a commitment to the execution and defense of certain policies. Blair reports in his earlier mentioned study of U.S. research in Guatemala on the tendency of U.S. agencies to report the results of

research they sponsor in internal publications that are either classified or prevented from circulation in other ways.

There is an additional aspect of U.S.-Latin American Studies that has fed the charge of academic colonialism and that has to be mentioned here. A substantial part of the research and publication effort of U.S. agencies, other organizations and individual scholars traditionally has breathed an ideology that, often unconsciously, has tended to rationalize and justify the dependence of Latin American nations on the U.S. This is not to say that many of these projects and publications did not identify the serious economic and social problems of the area, for they did. They also at times exhibit a real concern for the situation of the poor and deprived segments of Latin American society. But these aspects are treated as mere internal problems. The link between the existence and persistence of local exploitative economic and social relations and the dimensions of international power relations is not one of the variables present in their treatises or models.²² Especially the older school of U.S. Latinamericanists has caused particular notoriety. This applies to the politico-ideological implications of their studies as well as to the manner in which they used to conduct their investigations.²³ Characteristic for most of their studies is: a strong antagonism toward revolutionary change, an approach to the phenomenon of social change in which the 'Western' model of societal development — and in particular the U.S. variant — is the ultimate yardstick with help of which societal processes are evaluated, an ignorance of variables relating to international decision-making and power-relations, the assumption — implicitly present — of a 'harmony of interest' in U.S.-Latin American relations.²⁴

U.S. response to the charge of academic colonialism

The response by individual scholars

Most individual scholars were alerted to frictions in U.S.-Latin American academic relations after the Camelot affair. It is remarkable however that in most reactions to Camelot, the concern for a possible negative impact on future research possibilities in Latin America and also on future federal sponsorship of social science research by far outweighs the opposition to the goals the project was designed to serve. The threats agency-directed research in general poses to

²² for an approach that takes these variables into consideration, see Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969, p. xiv, p. 352.

²³ Schaedel, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²⁴ I will save the reader the long list of publications, especially from the realm of Latin American history, political science and sociology, that exhibit these characteristics in varying combination. See for some references: James Petras, 'U.S.-Latin American Studies: A Critical Assessment', in: *Science and Society*, 32, 2, 1968, pp. 148-168.

the integrity of science itself were also not many a social scientist's concern.²⁵

A well-known Latinamericanist like Silvert laments Camelot primarily in terms of the consequences for his own research effort: it 'messes up the field'. He does not voice an opposition to the project on principle or even professional ethics. On the contrary, the enthusiasm for the project among the social scientists involved was 'easy to understand'.²⁶ The reader is not surprised when later on in his essay Silvert presents an instrumentalist approach to social science which exactly made participation in a project like Camelot for other scholars possible. The Camelot fiasco, says Silvert, 'could at least have been mitigated, if not totally avoided, if greater skill had been used in organization and administration'.²⁷ Galtung reports having encountered similar attitudes in contact with U.S. social scientists.²⁸

The need for a serious consideration of the situation in which U.S. sponsored research found itself after Camelot, led to deliberations over 'the strategy' to follow.²⁹ Again, the 'problems' caused by mistakes in the set-up and execution of research projects in Latin America or by pressures existing in the milieu in which the researcher is conducting his research figure high in the discussion. Very indicatively one talks about 'obstacles' that interfere with a proper, unhindered execution of the research process. No attention is paid to the ideological moorings of U.S. social science research in Latin America, no serious doubt to the 'harmony of interests' idea can be discovered. The need for a more adequate legitimization of cross-cultural research is acknowledged, at the same time however it is defined as a political and not a scientific question and promptly not taken into consideration. For 'the other side' however this is the crux of the problem.³⁰ Kubat and Nett end up formulating a plea for the development of an adequate theoretical basis for social science research cooperation between cultures, and in general one can agree although one might doubt its ability to provide a definitive solution to the 'problems' of U.S.-Latin American social science research.

Whyte, in an article reviewing the experience of the Cornell-Peru project, shows an acute awareness of the issues surrounding U.S. social science research in Latin America. No wonder his article starts out with the question if the U.S. social scientist still has a useful role to play in the developing countries of the

²⁵ an exception: Herbert Blumer, 'Threats from Agency-Determined Research The Case of Camelot', in: Horowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-174.

²⁶ Kalman H. Silvert, 'American Academic Ethics and Social Research Abroad: The Lesson of Project Camelot', in: Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 93 ff.

²⁹ Daniel Kubat and Roger Nett, eds., *Strategies of Social Research Cooperation in Latin America*, Proceedings of a Faculty Seminar at the University of Pittsburgh, January-April, 1966, *passim*.

³⁰ cf. Fals Borda, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

world.³¹ Individual researchers and also some foundations have tried recently to meet some of the problems underlying the phenomenon of academic colonialism through various means. Interpersonal reciprocity and university-institutional development through teaching by U.S. scholars while future native replacements are being trained at U.S. universities are both rejected by Whyte as unsuitable in affecting profoundly the asymmetric organization of U.S. research in Latin America. The first mentioned approach maintains local scholars in a dependent position vis-à-vis his U.S. patrón, the second one manifests the various problems accompanying exchange programs we mentioned before. Whyte presents a different strategy, used in the Cornell-Peru project, placing primary emphasis upon building a collaborative research program. The program involved: local participation in the planning, duplicate sets of all data accumulated, combined local/U.S. direction of the data gathering process, the processing and analysis of the data, the training of students, local publication of the research results in Spanish. A meaningful realization of these types of programs very much depends on the kind of study one wants to realize. Tight research designs like the ones used in large-scale survey research require tight organization structures that often do not allow for meaningful local participation in all phases of the research process. Furthermore these types of programs require a considerable number of scholars and relatively large amounts of money and time which virtually prohibit its use for the rather limited one or two man ventures, which is what most projects actually are. This problem could be tackled, as Whyte indicates, by channeling all U.S. social science research in specific Latin American countries through U.S. universities which have specialized in building a collaborative research program with these countries, a solution that again might create problems of concentration of power on the one side and dependency on the other (cf. the issue of problem selection), which only already because of the financial overweight on one side of the relationship are not that easy to solve.

Whyte is not very optimistic about the future of U.S. social science research in Latin America. He calls on the researcher to devote as much attention to the elaboration of more effective models of international research collaboration as to the research design and the analysis of the data, but he is not sure if this strategy will carry fruit in terms of a continued U.S. research presence in Latin America.

*The response of various organizations having an interest in U.S.-
Latin American research*

Few U.S. agencies or representatives of private foundations have directed them-

³¹ William Foote Whyte, 'The Role of the U.S. Professor in Developing Countries', in: *The American Sociologist*, 4, 1, 1969, p. 19.

selves directly to the issue of academic colonialism, although the Latin American reactions to the various manifestations of this phenomenon figure as 'problems of research in Latin America' in their publications. The Latin American Studies Association (L.A.S.A.) has been the only one who has tried to verify the charges and to formulate on the basis of the findings some recommendations for future U.S. research ventures.

In the response of representatives of agencies and private foundations a few common themes appear: first, the prevalence of a 'harmony of interests' ideology, a conflict model of U.S.-Latin American relations is not considered; second, a tendency to view the 'problems' in U.S. research and university-institution building in the first place as 'technical' ones, solvable for a nation that 'puts a man on the moon'³²; third, and related to the two other themes, a myopic view of U.S.-Latin American relations, a disheartening inability 'to take the role of the other' in an effort to understand his perception of certain types of agency and foundation-sponsored research. Blumer, in a neat article, has indicated some of the threats agency-sponsored research poses to the integrity of science, where it tends to impose restrictions on what has to be researched and what not, where it tends to operate — while hiding its practical interests and policy orientations — in complete contempt for the rights, interests and aspirations of the subjects of research.³³ Little or no awareness however of these issues is shown. A few examples:

Tiller, in an exposition on 'the viewpoint of the U.S. Government' (which stands for the various departments and agencies involved in research in Latin America), voices regret about recent reductions in federal appropriations for international research and exchange at a time when an understanding is needed of 'why the citizens of country A favor mixed public-government enterprises; the peasants of country B do not respond to innovation; the peasants of country C eagerly accept American help which proves to be ineffective; the scholars of country D reject the U.S. educational system, while in country E the reverse is true; and so on through an endless maze of developmental problems'.³⁴

Atcon (Department of Educational Affairs, O.A.S.) in a paper proposing a change of approach to international exchange and university-institution building, ends up formulating an apology for what he sees as U.S. interests. Spending more money on the existing University institutions has to be avoided, it will result in 'more social imbalance', too much in the past has served 'political extremes'.³⁵ The solution, according to him, is the introduction of U.S. models: the university has to be administered as 'a big enterprise', using 'American-invented administra-

³² Tiller, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³³ Blumer, *op. cit.*, p. 158 ff.

³⁴ Tiller, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁵ Rudolph P. Atcon, 'Integrated University Reform', paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition*, *op. cit.*, p. 4, p. 29.

tive techniques'.³⁶ This all, so one can effect in an 'objective' and 'technically adequate' way the growth of new institutions, serving 'order and progress'.³⁷

Wilhelm (The Ford Foundation) acknowledges that the foundation's research and university-institution building effort in Latin America did not always have 'building Latin American strength for its own sake' as its primary objective and that at times 'other motives' have become predominant.³⁸ He indicates the desirability of a change from 'technical assistance' to a strategy taking as its primary objective the promotion of the strength of professional and intellectual communities in Latin America dedicating themselves to building 'a Latin American social science' free from paternalistic overtones or imposition of U.S. models.³⁹ We do not know to what extent this intention has been translated into practical policy. The situation is complicated by the fact that a single-minded or homogeneous foundation is hard to find and that their involvement in research and university-institution building has been deep and diverse.⁴⁰

The response of the professional organization of U.S. Latinamericanists has been different. We find here an awareness of the scope of the issue and a sincere effort to take the views of 'the other side' into consideration. On the basis of a study of the U.S. research practice in some Latin American nations a series of recommendations was formulated in which the responsibility of scholars and granting agencies to the larger scholarly community has been indicated. I will mention here a few of these recommendations, some of them appear to have a wider relevance than the field of U.S.-Latin American Studies.⁴¹

As responsibilities of the scholar and the sponsoring organization are indicated: contact with local scholars for professional opinions on the relevance of a planned project to local research priorities and on its adaptability to local conditions; briefing contacts with senior scholars familiar with the local research scene together with exploratory visits before initiating research in a country; an inquiry as to the research reputation of a scholar prior to accepting sponsorship of his research; the development of adequate language abilities prior to research; a rigorous supervision of scholars-in-training; an obligation with the sponsoring organization to investigate to what extent the scholar has met his responsibilities toward the local scholarly community; the encouragement of joint research and the promotion of local clearing-houses of research to be

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

³⁸ Harry E. Wilhelm, 'The Effects of Foundations Upon Social Research in Latin America', in: Kubat and Nett, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 74 ff.

⁴⁰ see f.e. Reuben Frodin, 'Foundations and Latin American Universities: A North American Point of View', paper presented at the conference *Universities in Transition*, *op. cit.*, passim, Frodin's (The Ford Foundation) presentation casts some doubt as to the meaningfulness of some of the changes from the 'old approach'.

⁴¹ Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 8 ff.

located in scholarly institutions.

As responsibilities of the scholar are mentioned: cooperation with local scholarly organizations in teaching, lecturing, etc., the training of local researchers as part of the project; communication of the findings of the project to the local scholarly community; publication of the ultimate results of the project in the national language and their location in a center from where they may receive further distribution and be easily accessible to local scholars.

To L.A.S.A. itself is recommended: the creation of a device which can serve the local scholarly community in identifying a scholar and his credentials; the identification of crucial areas of research and training both from a local and a continental point of view and the determination of priorities among them; the consolidation of information about current research in order to avoid unintentional duplication of research efforts.

These recommendations are guidelines and not binding on anybody. They only indicate what a U.S. scholar might be expected to do when working abroad and what a local scholarly community might expect from a visiting scholar.⁴² The problem of agency-sponsored and other research with dubious politico-ideological connotations is with these guidelines not resolved, unless local scholarly cooperation on all levels is made dependent on a recommendation of the project by a community of national scholars or preferably a national scholarly organization. And even in that case the possibilities for research with questionable intentions would not be completely eliminated.

Conclusion

We have defined 'academic colonialism', with Galtung, as a process whereby the center of gravity for the acquisition of knowledge about the nation is located outside the nation itself. This process implies a hierarchical relationship between, in the U.S.-Latin American situation, the superior colonizer (U.S. researchers, foundations, agencies, etc.) and the inferior subject (local scholars, institutions, universities, etc.) and a series of mechanisms (project organization, exchange, university-institution building, etc.) which, at least in the eyes of the subjects, are geared to the maintenance of the superiority-inferiority relationship.

In this relationship the initiative has traditionally been with the 'colonizer', initiative in the accumulation of social science research data on Latin America, in determining the focus of research and its theoretical and methodological orientation, in decision-making with regard to the organization and execution of research projects, in defining the structure of new local academic institutions.⁴³

Within this context we can view Latin American reactions like Graciarena's

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴³ for some aspects of the colonial relationship, cf. J. A. A. van Doorn en W. J. Hendrix, *Ontsporing van Geweld*. Universitaire Pers Rotterdam, 1970, p. 17 ff.

attack on the exploitative nature of foreign research in Latin America⁴⁴, Fals Borda's plea for a 'subversive sociology' and the entire discussion in the second half of the sixties on a re-orientation of sociological analysis involving Pablo González Casanova, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Theotonio dos Santos, Florestán Fernandes, Aldo Solari and many others, as an initiative from 'the other side' with obvious consequences for the superiority-inferiority relationship.

We might explain the L.A.S.A. guidelines for U.S. social science research in Latin America as a defensive response of the interested party, in an effort to maintain the U.S. research presence in Latin America and to integrate the local scholarly community with this effort while preserving ample room for U.S. initiative. The L.A.S.A. initiative appears to represent already a mentality totally different from the one prevailing some ten years before when the Latin-americanists within the American Council of Learned Societies decided that an association was needed 'with its heart in the academic community' while at the same time keeping the door open for 'selected Government, business and other interests relating to Latin America'.⁴⁵ Yet I do not think that L.A.S.A.'s orientation as to the basic factors underlying the phenomenon of academic colonialism, is a complete one. The conflict between the Latin American scholarly community and the U.S. researchers cannot only be reduced to a problem of conflicting values, norms and organizational set-up of the respective academic systems, although it is admittedly an important dimension.⁴⁶ The issue of academic colonialism, as it applies to U.S.-Latin American Studies, and the response it has evoked in Latin America cannot be isolated from the existence of colonialistic-type arrangements in other spheres than the strict academic one and the general call for an end to these dependency-relationships. The future research presence of the U.S. in this environment, increasingly hostile to their interests, then looks somewhat uncertain.⁴⁷ The question if the individual researcher should be held responsible for the policies of the government or business community of his country (which of course in general we can answer negatively) is here not that much the problem as the extent to which these aspects of his country's presence in Latin America do overshadow the individual research intent.

U.S. agencies, foundations and individual researchers have answered the charge of academic colonialism with the definition of new strategies of social research cooperation that would handle the problem of asymmetry in U.S.-Latin American research. But neither interpersonal reciprocity or university-institution building

⁴⁴ Jorge Graciarena, *Poder y Clases Sociales en América Latina*. Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1967, p. 276, p. 279.

⁴⁵ Howard F. Cline, 'La Asociación de Estudios Latinoamericanos: Un Examen Sumario'. in: *Latin American Research Review*, 2, 1, 1966, Serie de Traducciones, p. 6 (my tr.)

⁴⁶ cf. Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁴⁷ cf. Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

coupled to exchange of scholars, nor the development of collaborative research programs does offer a guarantee of survival to the U.S. research presence. L.A.S.A. has formulated some guidelines directed to the problem of asymmetry and, as a good professional organization, added some recommendations relating to improvements in the level of performance of its members and the weeding out of 'impostors'. Will these do? They will indeed eliminate frictions in the contact between the U.S. and Latin American scholarly communities, if they chose to be guided by them. But this may not be enough. What would be needed is an honest self-assessment of the field of U.S.-Latin American Studies as to the theoretical assumptions — and especially where they can be linked to a particular political ideology — that have guided Latinamericanists in their choice of topics, research procedures, analysis and presentation of the data.⁴⁸ This kind of study would not have to lead to a set of recommendations, they would be neither necessary nor desirable. It might help to answer however some hard questions on the politico-ideological implications of the work produced in the field of U.S.-Latin American Studies and provide a possible starting point for a re-orientation of social science analysis in that area of specialization.

Apart from the difficulties in organizing such a study and the fact that a professional organization not easily enters into such self-scrutiny⁴⁹, there is another factor that may make a process as indicated above not likely to occur soon.

Over the last decades the overall ethical orientation of U.S. social scientists has shifted in emphasis, a change associated with shifts in their status in American society.⁵⁰ The work of earlier U.S. social scientists often exhibited a sharp 'problem-consciousness' and at times had a melioristic intent. This situation has changed. Social scientists have been drawn more and more into 'establishment' positions. The orientation of their work has changed. They have become more supportive of the system of which they are nowadays so firm a part. Although in politico-ideological respect they would have to be located, in general, to the liberal side of the political center, they often exhibit a sharp antagonism toward more radical, revolutionary orientations and ideologies.⁵¹ This phenomenon generates special problems in an area like Latin America where a new generation of social scientists perceives its role to be in the forefront of radical social change of the societal order. They view many of the old arguments for objectivity and value-free analysis within the context of Latin America, turn into principles for

⁴⁸ for the impact of these assumptions on the ultimate result of the analysis, see: Gideon Sjoberg and Roger Nett, *A Methodology for Social Reserach*. New York: Harper and Row, 1968, p. 58 ff.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 121 ff.

⁵¹ the antagonism is mutual, cf. Martin Nicolaus, *Fat-Cat Sociology*, remarks at the American Sociological Association Convention, Boston, August 1968; for the field of Latin American Studies, see: *Subliminal Warfare, The Role of Latin American Studies*. The North American Congress on Latin America, New York, 1970.

maintenance of the status quo against which they are fighting.⁵²

It might be the dilemma of many a Latinamericanist that at a time when the patient has begun to sit up on the operating table, demanding a change of the dissecting procedures he may not be able or willing to answer the call.⁵³

⁵² Orlando Fals Borda, quoted by Franco, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁵³ notion from Jessie Bernard, 'Letter to the Editor', in: *The American Sociologist*, 5, 4, 1970, p. 374.